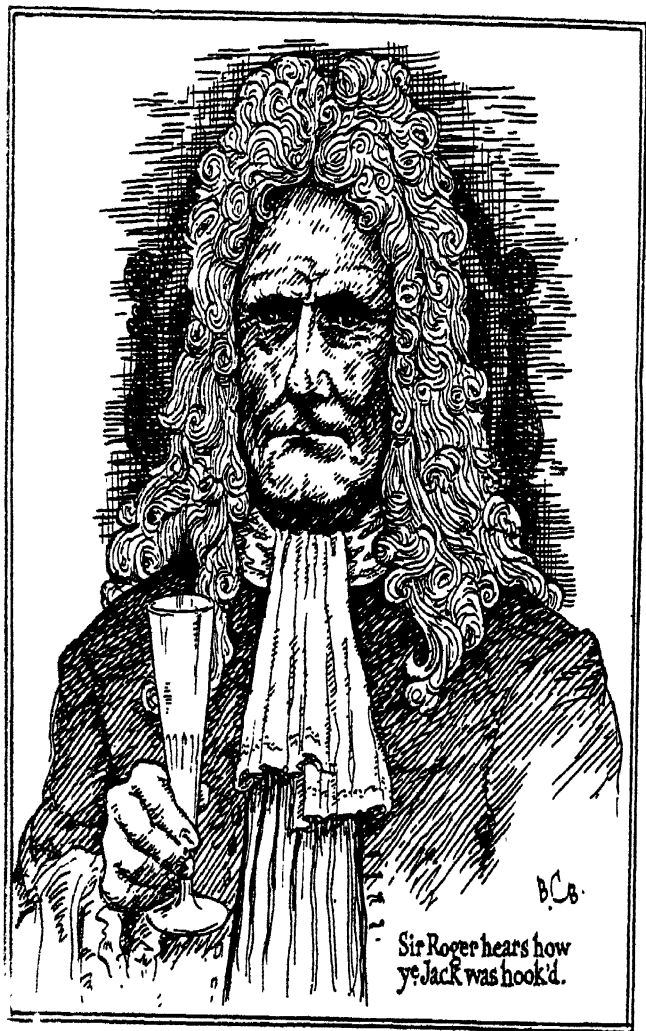


THE HERITAGE OF LITERATURE SERIES

General Editor:
E. W. PARKER, M.C.

A series that will lead to wider
horizons by awakening a love
of good books, and by providing
a key to the treasures of the
world's best thought.

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE
ESSAYS AND BELLES
LETTRES
DRAMA
FICTION
MYTHS AND FOLK LORE
HISTORY
LIFE AND LETTERS
POETRY



B.C.B.

Sir Roger hears how
ye Jack was hook'd.

ENGLISH ESSAYISTS

Edited by

R. W. JEPSON, M.A.

CHECKED 1971

With a frontispiece by
B. C. BOULTER

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
LONDON • NEW YORK • TORONTO

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO LTD
6 & 7 CLIFFORD STREET LONDON W 1
THIBAUT HOUSE THIBAUT SQUARE CAPE TOWN
605-611 LONSDALE STREET MELBOURNE C 1
LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO INC.
55 FIFTH AVENUE NEW YORK 3
LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO
20 CRANFIELD ROAD TORONTO 16
ORIENT LONGMANS PRIVATE LTD
CALCUTTA BOMBAY MADRAS
DELHI HYDERABAD DACCA

First published 1940
Sixth impression 1958

INTRODUCTION

FRANCIS BACON, the first English Essayist, was a distinguished lawyer, statesman and philosopher. He chose the title *Essays*, he tells us, for 'certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously' on subjects 'coming home to men's business and bosoms' and 'whereof a man shall find much in experience, little in books.' Most of these essays, compared with the others in this book, are brief indeed; but they are packed tight with the fruits of the experience of a shrewd, observant and practised man of affairs: his expression is terse and epigrammatic, and many of his sentences are—to use his own words—not 'to be swallowed' hurriedly, but 'to be chewed and digested' with deliberation. Bacon's *Essays* are indeed a storehouse of thought-provoking aphorisms: only occasionally does he descend from the chilly air of wise abstractions to treat with a simple and human charm a subject like *On Gardens*.

Between Bacon and the next essayists represented in this selection, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison, there is a gap of a century. Of Steele's character and chequered career we obtain a glimpse in one of Austin Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* reprinted in this volume. Addison was a schoolfellow of Steele's, a Whig politician of some note, and a popular poet. In *The Tatler*, founded by Steele in 1709, *The Spectator* which replaced it under the joint control of Steele and Addison in 1711, and *The Guardian*, another of Steele's journalistic ventures, these two contributed a large number of essays, mostly of topical interest and relating to the social life of the time. In these essays, the England of Queen Anne lives again: as we read them, we seem to gather with the beaux in the coffee houses, mix with the throngs at theatre doors, join the fine ladies in the drawing-rooms, enjoy the hospitality of the country

INTRODUCTION

squire at dinner, or accompany him to church, or sit with him on the local bench. The manners, fashions and foibles of those days are described with a tender humour and gentle irony. But perhaps their most distinctive feature is the skilful characterisation of figures like Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Honeycomb, and Captain Sentry by 'men who loved the individual better than the type, and delighted in precisely those touches of character, eccentricities and surprises, that give life to a literary portrait.' The middle classes in England were just emerging from comparative ignorance and boorishness: Steele and Addison helped largely to popularise literature and to spread culture, polite manners and good taste among them. Addison claims to have 'brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses,' and to have 'enlivened morality with wit, and tempered wit with morality.'

It is from these light, graceful and urbane compositions of Steele and Addison that the familiar essay has developed and it has remained, as it began, an integral feature of the best kind of journalism. The tradition set in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* was followed closely fifty years later by Oliver Goldsmith in his contributions to *The Bee* and *The Public Ledger*. For the latter he wrote his *Chinese Letters* (afterwards reprinted as *The Citizen of the World*). In them he posed as a Chinaman writing to a friend in Pekin on the England of the day, and he passes judgment on current manners, fashions and superstitions with an ironic humour comparable to that of Addison, and in a style that has an ease and grace of its own. Goldsmith led a restless and improvident existence, and the characters whose portraits he draws are taken from the strange company in which he often found himself—the hacks of Grub Street, plausible wastrels who lived on their wits, strolling players, and the inhabitants of the 'shabby genteel' world. In this world lived Beau

INTRODUCTION

Tibbs and Goldsmith's portrait of this 'important trifler' is fit to rank with that of Sir Roger de Coverley.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the familiar essay in the hands of William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb ('Elia'), and James Henry Leigh Hunt took on a new phase. The moralising tone and rather didactic attitude of Steele and Addison disappeared : instead, the essayist strikes a strongly personal note, he takes his readers into his confidence and writes as if he were talking to them at his own fireside, and he reveals his tastes, his prejudices, his philosophy and his attitude towards men and things. Hazlitt was a man of marked prejudices, a persuasive special pleader, a born rebel, and never happier than when arguing. His style is forcible and clear, and free from mannerisms. However much we may disagree with him, he is never dull, and his judgments on art, literature and life retain their freshness to-day. Hazlitt was a discriminating literary critic, his memory was stored with the fruits of wide reading, and his essays are packed with literary allusions and quotations. No essayist is so intensely personal as the gentle Elia, and the character he reveals is vastly different from that of his friend and admirer Hazlitt. He has that elusive quality charm, and much of it lies in his whimsicality, subtlety and pathos. He excelled in the vivid rendering of personality and atmosphere, in which he shows a sympathetic candour and humour devoid of ridicule or malice. The immortal *Dissertation upon Roast Pig* illustrates well his particular type of humour: in it he revelled in incongruous and topsy-turvy situations, in putting side by side the sublime and the ridiculous, in mingling dignified solemnities with droll conversational idioms and in clothing trivial or undignified incidents in magniloquent phrases, often coined from the Latin for the occasion. Leigh Hunt, the youngest of the trio, pales perhaps in comparison with the other two. He has neither the forcibility or the depth of Hazlitt, nor the whimsicality or the subtlety of Lamb; but he has a

INTRODUCTION

gay and light touch; on occasions, as in the essay on *The Deaths of Little Children* he can rise to heights of pathos; and his portrait of *The Old Lady* might well hang with those of Sir Roger and Beau Tibbs. Leigh Hunt's essays perhaps keep closer to the Addisonian tradition, but in one respect they point more directly to the moderns—in the choice of subject from 'daily trifles and light fugitive things.'

And so we come to the Victorians. The fame of Dickens and Thackeray rests chiefly on their novels, and their essays—though but tasks by the way—do not deserve the neglect they receive, and, in the opinion of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, match those of Steele and Addison on their own ground. But neither recaptured the intimate personal touch of Lamb: this was reserved for Robert Louis Stevenson, in whose essays the 'personal and lyrical' phase is once more exemplified.

Three specimens of modern essays are given from the pen of Robert Lynd, who under the pseudonym of Y.Y. has been writing a weekly essay for *The New Statesman* for nearly thirty years. The modern essay in his and other hands shows characteristics traceable to one or other of its ancestors: its matter 'comes home to men's bosoms,' and nothing of human interest is excluded from its range; it mirrors its own age, but in a glass tinted with its author's personality; it never presumes to teach or preach, but deals tolerantly with the follies of mankind, and never probes too deeply into the tragic or seamy side of life; it has the light, personal touch of an intimate letter; and its object is to entertain.

CONTENTS

FRANCIS BACON, VISCOUNT ST. ALBANS (1561-1626)	PAGE
Of Travel	1
Of Studies	4
Of Gardens	6
RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729)	
The Fine Gentleman.	13
The Art of Conversation	16
JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)	
Sir Roger and Will. Wimble	22
Sir Roger at the Play	26
The Man of the Town	30
The Vision of Justice	33
Frozen Words	43
OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)	
The Character of an Important Trifler	48
His Character Continued	51
National Prejudices	55
Adventures of a Strolling Player	59
Mad Dogs	69
On the Use of Language	74
WILLIAM HAZLITT (1788-1830)	
On Going a Journey	80
The Letter-Bell	92
Macbeth	98
CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)	
A Dissertation upon Roast Pig	110
Old China	118
Barbara S—	125
Captain Starkey	131

CONTENTS

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT (1784-1850)	PAGE
Deaths of Little Children	136
Of Sticks	141
The Old Lady	150
CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)	
The City of the Absent	154
Brokers' and Marine-Store Shops.	164
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)	
On a Chalk Mark on the Door	170
Nil Nisi Bonum	183
AUSTIN DOBSON (1840-1921)	
Steele's Letters	193
ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)	
Apology for Idlers	199
Walking Tours	210
Memoirs of an Islet	219
ROBERT LYND (1879-)	
On Going Abroad	225
Forgetting	231
A Disappointed Man	236
NOTES	241

Acknowledgment is due to the following for permission to use copyright material:—

Mr. Robert Lynd and Messrs. Methuen and Co., Ltd., for "On Going Abroad," from *The Money Box*; Mr. Robert Lynd and the Editor of *The New Statesman and Nation* for "Forgetting" and "A Disappointed Man"; and Mr. Lloyd Osbourne for "Walking Tours" and "Apology for Idlers" from *Virginibus Puerisque* by R. L. Stevenson, and for "Memoirs of an Islet" from *Memories and Portraits* by R. L. Stevenson.

OF TRAVEL

TRAVEL, in the younger sort, is a part of education; in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country, before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor or grave servant, I allow well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go, what acquaintances they are to seek, what exercises or discipline the place yieldeth; for else young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little. It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation: let diaries, therefore, be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are, the courts of princes, especially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns; and so the havens and harbours, antiquities and ruins, libraries, colleges, disputations, and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure, near great cities; armouries, arsenals, magazines, exchanges, burses, warehouses, exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like: comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable in the places where they go; after all which the tutors or servants ought to make

OF TRAVEL

diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such shows, men need not to be put in mind of them: yet they are not to be neglected. If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room, and in short time to gather much, this you must do: first, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth; then he must have such a servant, or tutor, as knoweth the country, as was likewise said: let him carry with him also some card, or book, describing the country where he travelleth, which will be a good key to his inquiry; let him keep also a diary; let him not stay long in one city or town, more or less as the place deserveth, but not long; nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another, which is a great adamant of acquaintance; let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth: let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place whither he removeth, that he may use his favour in those things he desireth to see or know; thus he may abridge his travel with much profit. As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel, that which is most of all profitable, is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors; for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many: let him also see and visit eminent persons in all kinds, which are of great name abroad, that he may be able to tell how the life agreeth with the fame; for quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided; they are commonly for mistresses, healths, place, and words; and let a man beware how he keepeth company with cholerick and quarrelsome persons; for they will engage him into their own quarrels. When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him, but maintain a correspondence

FRANCIS BACON

by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth; and let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories: and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

FRANCIS BACON.

OF STUDIES

STUDIES serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humour of a scholar: they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know

FRANCIS BACON

that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: 'Abeunt studia in mores'; nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head and the like; so if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find difference, let him study the schoolmen; for they are 'Cymini sectores.' If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases: so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

FRANCIS BACON.

OF GARDENS

GOD Almighty first planted a garden; and, indeed, it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man; without which buildings and palaces are but gross handyworks: and a man shall ever see, that, when ages grow to civility and elegancy, men come to build stately, sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection. I do hold it in the royal ordering of gardens, there ought to be gardens for all the months in the year, in which, severally, things of beauty may be then in season. For December, and January, and the latter part of November, you must take such things as are green all winter: holly, ivy, bays, juniper, cypress-trees, yew, pineapple-trees; fir-trees, rosemary, lavender; periwinkle, the white, the purple, and the blue; germander, flags, orange-trees, lemon-trees, and myrtles, if they be stoved; and sweet marjoram, warm set. There followeth, for the latter part of January and February, the mezereon-tree, which then blossoms: crocus vernus, both the yellow and the grey; primroses, anemones, the early tulip, the hyacinthus orientalis, chamaïris, fritelaria. For March, there come violets, especially the single blue, which are the earliest; the yellow daffodil, the daisy, the almond-tree in blossom, the peach-tree in blossom, the cornelian-tree in blossom, sweet-briar. In April follow the double white violet, the wallflower, the stock-gilliflower, the cowslip, flower-de-luces and lilies of all natures; rosemary-flowers, the tulip, the double peony, the pale daffodil, the French honeysuckle, the cherry-tree in blossom, the damascene and plum-trees in blossom, the white thorn in leaf, the lilac-tree. In May and June come pinks of all sorts, specially the blush-pink; roses of all kinds, except the musk, which comes later; honeysuckles, strawberries, bugloss, columbine,

FRANCIS BACON

the French marygold, flos Africanus, cherry-tree in fruit, ribes, figs in fruit, rasps, vine-flowers, lavender in flowers, the sweet satyrian, with the white flower; herba muscaria, lilium convallium, the apple-tree in blossom. In July come gilliflowers of all varieties, musk-roses, the lime-tree in blossom, early pears, and plums in fruit, genitings, codlins. In August come plums of all sorts in fruit, pears, apricots, barberries, filberts, muskmelons, monks-hoods, of all colours. In September come grapes, apples, poppies of all colours, peaches, melocotones, nectarines, cornelians, wardenes, quinces. In October, and the beginning of November come services, medlars, bullaces, roses cut or removed to come late, hollyoaks, and such like. These particulars are for the climate of London; but my meaning is perceived, that you may have 'ver perpetuum,' as the place affords.

And because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air (where it comes and goes, like the warbling of music), than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a morning's dew. Bays, likewise, yield no smell as they grow, rosemary little, nor sweet marjoram; that which, above all others, yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year, about the middle of April, and about Bartholomew-tide. Next to that is the musk-rose; then the strawberry leaves dying, with a most excellent cordial smell; then the flower of the vines, it is a little dust like the dust of a bent, which grows upon the cluster in the first coming forth; then sweet-briar, then wallflowers, which are very delightful to be set under a parlour or lower chamber window; then pinks and gilliflowers, specially the matted pink and clove gilliflower; then the flowers of the lime-trees; then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar

OF GARDENS

off. Of bean-flowers I speak not, because they are field-flowers; but those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three; that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints; therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

For gardens (speaking of those which are indeed prince-like, as we have done of buildings), the contents ought not well to be under thirty acres of ground, and to be divided into three parts; a green in the entrance, a heath, or desert, in the going forth, and the main garden in the midst, besides alleys on both sides; and I like well, that four acres of ground be assigned to the green, six to the heath, four and four to either side, and twelve to the main garden. The green hath two pleasures: the one, because nothing is more pleasant to the eye than green grass kept finely shorn; the other, because it will give you a fair alley in the midst, by which you may go in front upon a stately hedge, which is to enclose the garden: but because the alley will be long, and in great heat of the year, or day, you ought not to buy the shade in the garden by going in the sun through the green; therefore you are, of either side the green, to plant a covert alley, upon carpenter's work, about twelve foot in height, by which you may go in shade into the garden. As for the making of knots, or figures, with divers coloured earths, that they may lie under the windows of the house on that side which the garden stands, they be but toys; you may see as good sights many times in tarts. The garden is best to be square, encompassed on all the four sides with a stately arched hedge; the arches to be upon pillars of carpenter's work, of some ten foot high, and six foot broad, and the spaces between of the same dimensions with the breadth of the arch. Over the arches let there be an entire hedge of some four foot high, framed also upon carpenter's work; and upon the upper hedge, over every arch, a

FRANCIS BACON

little turret, with a belly enough to receive a cage of birds: and over every space between the arches some other little figure, with broad plates of round coloured glass gilt, for the sun to play upon: but this hedge I intend to be raised upon a bank, not steep, but gently slope, of some six foot, set all with flowers. Also I understand that this square of the garden should not be the whole breadth of the ground, but to leave on either side ground enough for diversity of side alleys, unto which the two covert alleys of the green may deliver you; but there must be no alleys with hedges at either end of this great enclosure; not at the hither end, for letting your prospect upon this fair hedge from the green; nor at the further end, for letting your prospect from the hedge through the arches upon the heath.

For the ordering of the ground within the great hedge, I leave it to variety of device; advising, nevertheless, that whatsoever form you cast it into first, it be not too busy, or full of work; wherein I, for my part, do not like images cut out in juniper or other garden stuff; they be for children. Little low hedges, round like welts, with some pretty pyramids, I like well; and in some places fair columns, upon frames of carpenter's work. I would also have the alleys spacious and fair. You may have closer alleys upon the side grounds, but none in the main garden. I wish also, in the very middle, a fair amount, with three ascents and alleys, enough for four to walk abreast; which I would have to be perfect circles, without any bulwarks or embossments; and the whole mount to be thirty foot high, and some fine banqueting-house with some chimneys neatly cast, and without too much glass.

For fountains, they are a great beauty and refreshment; but pools mar all, and make the garden unwholesome, and full of flies and frogs. Fountains I intend to be of two natures; the one that sprinkleth or spouteth water: the other a fair receipt of water, of some thirty or forty foot square, but without fish, or slime, or mud.

OF GARDENS

For the first, the ornaments of images, gilt or of marble, which are in use, do well: but the main matter is so to convey the water, as it never stay, either in the bowls or in the cistern: that the water be never by rest discoloured, green, or red, or the like, or gather any mossiness or putrefaction; besides that, it is to be cleansed every day by the hand: also some steps up to it, and some fine pavement about it doth well. As for the other kind of fountain, which we may call a bathing-pool, it may admit much curiosity and beauty, wherewith we will not trouble ourselves: as, that the bottom be finely paved, and with images; the sides likewise; and withal embellished with coloured glass, and such things of lustre; encompassed also with fine rails of low statuas: but the main point is the same which we mentioned in the former kind of fountain; which is, that the water be in perpetual motion, fed by a water higher than the pool, and delivered into it by fair spouts, and then discharged away under ground, by some equality of bores, that it stay little; and for fine devices, of arching water without spilling, and making it rise in several forms (of feathers, drinking-glasses, canopies, and the like), they be pretty things to look on, but nothing to health and sweetness.

For the heath, which was the third part of our plot, I wish it to be framed as much as may be to a natural wildness. Trees I would have none in it, but some thickets made only of sweet-briar and honeysuckle, and some wild vine amongst; and the ground set with violets, strawberries, and primroses; for these are sweet, and prosper in the shade; and these to be in the heath here and there, not in any order. I like also little heaps, in the nature of mole-hills (such as are in wild heaths), to be set, some with wild thyme, some with pinks, some with germander, that gives a good flower to the eye; some with periwinkle, some with violets, some with strawberries, some with cowslips, some with daisies, some with red roses, some with liliū convallium, some

FRANCIS BACON

with sweet-williams red, some with bear's foot, and the like low flowers, being withal sweet and sightly; part of which heaps to be with standards of little bushes pricked upon their top, and part without: the standards to be roses, juniper, holly, barberries (but here and there, because of the smell of their blossom), red currants, gooseberries, rosemary, bays, sweet-briar, and such like: but these standards to be kept with cutting, that they grow not out of course.

For the side grounds, you are to fill them with variety of alleys, private, to give a full shade; some of them, wheresoever the sun be. You are to frame some of them likewise for shelter, that when the wind blows sharp, you may walk as in a gallery: and those alleys must be likewise hedged at both ends, to keep out the wind; and these closer alleys must be ever finely gravelled, and no grass, because of going wet. In many of these alleys, likewise, you are to set fruit-trees of all sorts, as well upon the walls as in ranges; and this should be generally observed, that the borders wherein you plant your fruit-trees be fair, and large, and low, and not steep; and set with fine flowers, but thin and sparingly, lest they deceive the trees. At the end of both the side grounds I would have a mount of some pretty height, leaving the wall of the enclosure breast-high, to look abroad into the fields.

For the main garden I do not deny but there should be some fair alleys ranged on both sides, with fruit-trees, and some pretty tufts of fruit-trees and arbours with seats, set in some decent order; but these to be by no means set too thick, but to leave the main garden so as it be not close, but the air open and free. For as for shade, I would have you rest upon the alleys of the side grounds, there to walk, if you be disposed, in the heat of the year or day; but to make account that the main garden is for the more temperate parts of the year, and, in the heat of summer, for the morning and the evening of overcast days.

OF GARDENS

For aviaries, I like them not, except they be of that largeness as they may be turfed, and have living plants and bushes set in them; that the birds may have more scope and natural nestling, and that no foulness appear in the floor of the aviary. So I have made a platform of a princely garden, partly by precept, partly by drawing; not a model, but some general lines of it; and in this I have spared for no cost: but it is nothing for great princes, that, for the most part, taking advice with workmen, with no less cost set their things together, and sometimes add statuas and such things, for state and magnificence, but nothing to the true pleasure of a garden.

FRANCIS BACON.

THE FINE GENTLEMAN

—Mores multorum vidit—HOR. *Ars Poet.* 142.
He many men, and many manners saw.

It is a most vexatious thing to an old man who endeavours to square his notions by reason and to talk from reflection and experience, to fall in with a circle of young ladies at their afternoon tea-table. This happened very lately to be my fate. The conversation, for the first half hour, was so very rambling, that it is hard to say what was talked of, or who spoke least to the purpose. The various motions of the fan, the tossings of the head, intermixt with all the pretty kinds of laughter, made up the greatest part of the discourse. At last, this modish way of shining and being witty settled into something like conversation, and the talk ran upon "FINE GENTLEMEN." From the several characters that were given, and the exceptions that were made, as this or that gentleman happen'd to be named, I found that a lady is not difficult to be pleased, and that the town swarms with Fine Gentlemen. A nimble pair of heels, a smooth complexion, a full-bottom wig, a laced shirt, an embroidered suit, a pair of fringed gloves, a hat and feather; any one or more of these and the like accomplishments ennoble a man, and raises him above the vulgar, in a female imagination. On the contrary, a modest serious behaviour, a plain dress, a thick pair of shoes, a leathern belt, a waistcoat not lined with silk, and such like imperfections, degrade a man and are so many blots in his escutcheon. I could not forbear smiling at one of the prettiest and liveliest of this gay assembly, who excepted to the gentility of Sir William Hearty, because he wore a frieze coat, and breakfasted upon toast and ale. I pretended to admire the fineness of her taste; and to strike in with her in ridiculing those awkward healthy gentlemen that seem to make nourishment the chief end of eating: I gave her an account of an honest Yorkshire

THE FINE GENTLEMAN

gentleman, who (when I was a traveller) used to invite his acquaintance at Paris to break their fast with him upon cold roast beef and mum. There was, I remember, a little French marquis, who was often pleased to rally him unmercifully upon beef and pudding, of which our countryman would dispatch a pound or two with great alacrity, while his antagonist was piddling at a mushroom or the haunch of a frog. I could perceive the lady was pleased with what I said, and we parted very good friends by virtue of a maxim I always observe, Never to contradict or reason with a sprightly female. I went home, however, full of a great many serious reflections upon what had passed: and though in complaisance I disguised my sentiments to keep up the good humour of my fair companions and to avoid being looked upon as a testy old fellow, yet, out of the good-will I bear to the sex, and to prevent for the future their being imposed upon by counterfeits, I shall give them the distinguishing marks of "a true fine gentleman."

When a good artist would express any remarkable character in sculpture, he endeavours to work up his figure into all the perfections his imagination can form; and to imitate not so much what is, as what may or ought to be. I shall follow their example, in the idea I am going to trace out of a fine gentleman, by assembling together such qualifications as seem requisite to make the character complete. In order to this I shall premise in general, that by a fine gentleman I mean a man completely qualified as well for the service and good as for the ornament and delight of society. When I consider the frame of mind peculiar to a gentleman, I suppose it graced with all the dignity and elevation of spirit that human nature is capable of. To this I would have joined a clear understanding, a reason free from prejudice, a steady judgment, and an extensive knowledge. When I think of the heart of a gentleman, I imagine it firm and intrepid, void of all inordinate passions, and full of tenderness, compassion, and benevolence. When I view the fine gentleman with regard

RICHARD STEELE

to his manners, methinks I see him modest without bashfulness, frank and affable without impertinence, obliging and complaisant without servility, cheerful and in good-humour without noise. These amiable qualities are not easily obtained; neither are there many men that have a genius to excel this way. A finished gentleman is perhaps the most uncommon of all the great characters in life. Besides the natural endowments with which this distinguished man is to be born, he must run through a long series of education. Before he makes his appearance and shines in the world, he must be principled in religion, instructed in all the moral virtues, and led through the whole course of the polite arts and sciences. He should be no stranger to courts and to camps; he must travel to open his mind, to enlarge his views, to learn the policies and interests of foreign states, as well as to fashion and polish himself, and to get clear of national prejudices, of which every country has its share. To all these more essential improvements, he must not forget to add the fashionable ornaments of life, such as are the languages and the bodily exercises most in vogue: neither would I have him think even dress itself beneath his notice.

It is no very uncommon thing in the world to meet with men of probity. There are likewise a great many men of honour to be found. Men of courage, men of sense, and men of letters are frequent. But a true fine gentleman is what one seldom sees. He is properly a compound of the various good qualities that embellish mankind. As the great poet animates all the different parts of learning by the force of his genius, and irradiates all the compass of his knowledge by the lustre and brightness of his imagination; so all the great and solid perfections of life appear in the finished gentleman, with a beautiful gloss and varnish; every thing he says or does is accompanied with a manner, or rather a charm, that draws the admiration and good-will of every beholder.

R. STEELE.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

—Dicenda tacendaque calles?

PERS. *Sat.* iv. 5.

—Dost thou, so young,

Know when to speak, and when to hold thy tongue?

DRYDEN.

JACK LIZARD was about fifteen when he was first entered in the university, and being a youth of a great deal of fire, and a more than ordinary application to his studies, it gave his conversation a very particular turn. He had too much spirit to hold his tongue in company; but at the same time so little acquaintance with the world, that he did not know how to talk like other people.

After a year and a half's stay at the university, he came down among us to pass away a month or two in the country. The first night after his arrival, as we were at supper, we were all of us very much improved by Jack's table-talk. He told us, upon the appearance of a dish of wild fowl, that according to the opinion of some natural philosophers they might be lately come from the moon. Upon which the Sparkler bursting out into a laugh, he insulted her with several questions relating to the bigness and distance of the moon and stars; and after every interrogatory would be winking upon me, and smiling at his sister's ignorance. Jack gained his point; for the mother was pleased, and all the servants stared at the learning of their young master. Jack was so encouraged at this success, that for the first week he dealt wholly in paradoxes. It was a common jest with him to pinch one of his sister's lap-dogs, and afterwards prove he could not feel it. When the girls were sorting a set of knots, he would demonstrate to them that all the ribbons were of the same colour; or rather, says Jack, or no colour at all. My lady Lizard herself, though she was not a little pleased with her son's improvements, was one day almost angry with him; for, having accidentally burnt

RICHARD STEELE

her fingers as she was lighting the lamp for her tea-pot, in the midst of her anguish Jack laid hold of the opportunity to instruct her that there was no such thing as heat in fire. In short, no day past over our heads, in which Jack did not imagine he made the whole family wiser than they were before.

That part of his conversation which gave me the most pain was what passed among those country gentlemen that came to visit us. On such occasions Jack usually took upon him to be the mouth of the company; and, thinking himself obliged to be very merry, would entertain us with a great many odd sayings and absurdities of their college-cook. I found this fellow had made a very strong impression upon Jack's imagination; which he never considered was not the case of the rest of the company, until after many repeated trials he found that his stories seldom made anybody laugh but himself.

I all this while looked upon Jack as a young tree shooting out into blossoms before its time; the redundancy of which, though it was a little unseasonable, seemed to foretell an uncommon fruitfulness.

In order to wear out the vein of pedantry which ran through his conversation, I took him out with me one evening, and first of all insinuated to him this rule, which I had myself learned from a very great author, 'To think with the wise, but talk with the vulgar.' Jack's good sense soon made him reflect that he had exposed himself to the laughter of the ignorant by a contrary behaviour; upon which he told me, that he would take care for the future to keep his notions to himself, and converse in the common received sentiments of mankind. He at the same time desired me to give him any other Rules of Conversation which I thought might be for his improvement. I told him I would think of it; and accordingly, as I have a particular affection for the young man, I gave him the next morning some Rules in writing, which may perhaps have contributed to make him the agreeable man he is now.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

THE faculty of interchanging our thoughts with one another, or what we express by the word Conversation, has always been represented by moral writers as one of the noblest privileges of reason, and which more particularly sets mankind above the brute part of the creation.

Though nothing so much gains upon the affections as this extempore eloquence, which we have constantly occasion for and are obliged to practise every day, we very rarely meet with any who excel in it.

The conversation of most men is disagreeable, not so much for want of wit and learning, as of good-breeding and discretion.

If you resolve to please, never speak to gratify any particular vanity or passion of your own, but always with a design either to divert or inform the company. A man who only aims at one of these is always easy in his discourse. He is never out of humour at being interrupted, because he considers that those who hear him are the best judges whether what he was saying could either divert or inform them.

A modest person seldom fails to gain the good-will of those he converses with, because nobody envies a man who does not appear to be pleased with himself.

We should talk extremely little of ourselves. Indeed what can we say? It would be as imprudent to discover our faults, as ridiculous to count over our fancied virtues. Our private and domestic affairs are no less improper to be introduced in conversation. What does it concern the company how many horses you keep in your stables? Or whether your servant is most knave or fool?

A man may equally affront the company he is in by engrossing all the talk or observing a contemptuous silence.

Before you tell a story it may be generally not amiss to draw a short character, and give the company a true idea, of the principal persons concerned in it; the beauty of most things consisting not so much in their being said

RICHARD STEELE

or done, as in their being said or done by such a particular person or on such a particular occasion.

Notwithstanding all the advantages of youth, few young people please in conversation; the reason is, that want of experience makes them positive, and what they say is rather with a design to please themselves than any one else.

It is certain that age itself shall make many things pass well enough which would have been laughed at in the mouth of one much younger.

Nothing, however, is more insupportable to men of sense than an empty formal man who speaks in proverbs and decides all controversies with a short sentence. This piece of stupidity is the more insufferable, as it puts on the air of wisdom.

A prudent man will avoid talking much of any particular science for which he is remarkably famous. There is not methinks an handsomer thing said of Mr. Cowley in his whole life than that none but his intimate friends ever discovered he was a great poet by his discourse. Besides the decency of this rule, it is certainly founded in good policy. A man who talks of any thing he is already famous for has little to get, but a great deal to lose. I might add, that he who is sometimes silent on a subject where every one is satisfied he could speak well will often be thought no less knowing in other matters, where perhaps he is wholly ignorant.

Women are frightened at the name of argument, and are sooner convinced by an happy turn or witty expression than by demonstration.

Whenever you commend, add your reasons for doing so; it is this which distinguishes the approbation of a man of sense from the flattery of sycophants and admiration of fools.

Raillery is no longer agreeable than while the whole company is pleased with it. I would least of all be understood to except the person rallied.

Though good humour, sense and discretion can seldom

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

fail to make a man agreeable, it may be no ill policy sometimes to prepare yourself in a particular manner for conversation, by looking a little further than your neighbours into whatever is become a reigning subject. If our armies are besieging a place of importance abroad, or our House of Commons debating a bill of consequence at home, you can hardly fail of being heard with pleasure, if you have nicely informed yourself of the strength, situation, and history of the first, or of the reasons for and against the latter. It will have the same effect if, when any single person begins to make a noise in the world, you can learn some of the smallest accidents in his life or conversation, which, though they are too fine for the observation of the vulgar, give more satisfaction to men of sense (as they are the best openings to a real character) than the recital of his most glaring actions. I know but one ill consequence to be feared from this method, namely, that coming full charged into company, you should resolve to unload whether an handsome opportunity offers itself or no.

Though the asking of questions may plead for itself the specious names of modesty and a desire of information, it affords little pleasure to the rest of the company who are not troubled with the same doubts; besides which, he who asks a question would do well to consider that he lies wholly at the mercy of another before he receives an answer.

Nothing is more silly than the pleasure some people take in what they call 'speaking their minds.' A man of this make will say a rude thing for the mere pleasure of saying it, when an opposite behaviour, full as innocent, might have preserved his friend or made his fortune.

It is not impossible for a man to form to himself as exquisite a pleasure in complying with the humour and sentiments of others, as of bringing others over to his own: since it is the certain sign of a superior genius that can take and become whatever dress it pleases.

I shall only add, that, besides what I have here said,

RICHARD STEELE

there is something which can never be learnt but in the company of the polite. The virtues of men are catching as well as their vices, and your own observations added to these will soon discover what it is that commands attention in one man, and makes you tired and displeased with the discourse of another.

R. STEELE.

SIR ROGER AND WILL. WIMBLE

As I was yesterday morning walking with Sir Roger before his house, a country fellow brought him a huge fish, which, he told him, Mr. William Wimble had caught that very morning; and that he presented it with his service to him, and intended to come and dine with him. At the same time he delivered a letter, which my friend read to me as soon as the messenger left him.

‘SIR ROGER,

‘I desire you to accept of a Jack, which is the best I have caught this season. I intend to come and stay with you a week, and see how the Perch bite in the Black river. I observed with some concern, the last time I saw you upon the Bowling-green, that your whip wanted a lash to it: I will bring half a dozen with me that I twisted last week, which I hope will serve you all the time you are in the country. I have not been out of the saddle for six days last past, having been at Eaton with Sir John’s eldest son. He takes to his learning hugely.

‘I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

WILL. WIMBLE.’

This extraordinary letter, and message that accompanied it, made me very curious to know the character and quality of the gentleman who sent them; which I found to be as follows. Will. Wimble is younger brother to a baronet, and descended of the ancient family of the Wimbles. He is now between forty and fifty; but being bred to no business, and born to no estate, he generally lives with his elder brother as superintendent of his game. He hunts a pack of dogs better than any man in the country, and is very famous for finding out a hare. He is extremely well versed in

JOSEPH ADDISON

all the little handicrafts of an idle man: he makes a May-fly to a miracle; and furnishes the whole country with angle-rods. As he is a good-natured, officious fellow, and very much esteemed upon account of his family, he is a welcome guest at every house, and keeps up a good correspondence among all the gentlemen about him. He carries a tulip root in his pocket from one to another, or exchanges a puppy between a couple of friends that live perhaps in the opposite sides of the county. Will. is a particular favourite of all the young heirs, whom he frequently obliges with a net that he has weaved, or a setting-dog that he has *made* himself; he now and then presents a pair of garters of his own knitting to their mothers or sisters; and raises a great deal of mirth among them, by inquiring, as often as he meets them, 'how they wear?' These gentleman-like manufactures, and obliging little humours, make Will. the darling of the country.

Sir Roger was proceeding in the character of him, when he saw him make up to us with two or three hazel-twigs in his hand, that he had cut in Sir Roger's woods, as he came through them in his way to the house. I was very much pleased to observe on one side the hearty and sincere welcome with which Sir Roger received him, and on the other, the secret joy which his guest discovered at sight of the good old knight. After the first salutes were over, Will. desired Sir Roger to lend him one of his servants to carry a set of shuttle-cocks he had with him in a little box to a lady that lived about a mile off, to whom it seems he had promised such a present for above this half-year. Sir Roger's back was no sooner turned, but honest Will. began to tell me of a large cock pheasant that he had sprung in one of the neighbouring woods, with two or three other adventures of the same nature. Odd and uncommon characters are the game that I look for, and most delight in; for which reason I was as much pleased with the novelty of the person that talked to me, as he could be for his life with the

SIR ROGER AND WILL. WIMBLE

springing of a pheasant, and therefore listened to him with more than ordinary attention.

In the midst of his discourse the bell rung to dinner, where the gentleman I have been speaking of had the pleasure of seeing the huge Jack he had caught served up for the first dish in a most sumptuous manner. Upon our sitting down to it, he gave us a long account how he had hooked it, played with it, foiled it, and at length drew it out upon the bank, with several other particulars, that lasted all the first course. A dish of wild fowl, that came afterwards, furnished conversation for the rest of the dinner, which concluded with a late invention of Will.'s for improving the quail-pipe.

Upon withdrawing into my room after dinner, I was secretly touched with compassion towards the honest gentleman that had dined with us; and could not but consider, with a great deal of concern, how so good an heart and such busy hands were wholly employed in trifles; that so much humanity should be so little beneficial to others, and so much industry so little advantageous to himself. The same temper of mind, and application to affairs, might have recommended him to the public esteem, and have raised his fortune in another station of life. What good to his country, or himself, might not a trader or merchant have done with such useful, though ordinary, qualifications?

Will. Wimble's is the case of many a younger brother of a great family, who had rather see their children starve like gentlemen, than thrive in a trade or profession that is beneath their quality. This humour fills several parts of Europe with pride and beggary. It is the happiness of a trading nation, like ours, that the younger sons, though incapable of any liberal art or profession, may be placed in such a way of life, as may perhaps enable them to vie with the best of their family: accordingly, we find several citizens that were launched into the world with narrow fortunes, rising by an honest industry to greater estates than those of their elder

JOSEPH ADDISON

brothers. It is not improbable but Will. was formerly tried at divinity, law, or physic; and that finding his genius did not lie that way, his parents gave him up at length to his own inventions. But certainly, however improper he might have been for studies of a higher nature, he was perfectly well turned for the occupations of trade and commerce.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

SIR ROGER AT THE PLAY

My friend Sir Roger de Coverley, when we last met together at the club, told me that he had a great mind to see the new tragedy with me, assuring me at the same time, that he had not been at a play these twenty years. The last I saw, said Sir Roger, was the Committee, which I should not have gone to neither, had not I been told before-hand that it was a good Church of England comedy. He then proceeded to inquire of me who this Distressed Mother was; and upon hearing that she was Hector's widow, he told me, that her husband was a brave man, and that when he was a school-boy he had read his life at the end of the dictionary. My friend asked me, in the next place, if there would not be some danger in coming home late, in case the Mohocks should be abroad. 'I assure you (says he) I thought I had fallen into their hands last night; for I observed two or three lusty black men that followed me half way up Fleet Street, and mended their pace behind me, in proportion as I put on to go away from them. You must know (continued the knight with a smile) I fancied they had a mind to hunt me: for I remember an honest gentleman in my neighbourhood, who was served such a trick in King Charles the Second's time; for which reason he has not ventured himself in town ever since. I might have shown them very good sport, had this been their design; for as I am an old fox-hunter, I should have turned and dodged, and have played them a thousand tricks they had never seen in their lives before.' Sir Roger added, that if these gentlemen had any such intention, they did not succeed very well in it; 'for I threw them out (says he) at the end of Norfolk Street, where I doubled the corner, and got shelter in my lodgings before they could imagine what was become of me. However (says the knight) if Captain Sentry will make

JOSEPH ADDISON

one with us to-morrow night, and if you will both of you call on me about four o'clock, that we may be at the house before it is full, I will have my own coach in readiness to attend you, for John tells me he has got the fore-wheels mended.'

The captain, who did not fail to meet me there at the appointed hour, bid Sir Roger fear nothing, for that he had put on the same sword which he had made use of at the battle of Steenkirk. Sir Roger's servants, and among the rest my old friend the butler, had, I found, provided themselves with good oaken plants, to attend their master upon this occasion. When we had placed him in his coach, with myself at his left hand, the captain before him, and his butler at the head of his footmen in the rear, we convoyed him in safety to the play-house; where, after having marched up the entry in good order, the captain and I went in with him, and seated him betwixt us in the pit. As soon as the house was full, and the candles lighted, my old friend stood up and looked about him with that pleasure, which a mind seasoned with humanity naturally feels in itself, at the sight of a multitude of people who seemed pleased with one another and partake of the same common entertainment. I could not but fancy to myself, as the old man stood up in the middle of the pit, that he made a very proper centre to a tragic audience. Upon the entering of Pyrrhus, the knight told me, that he did not believe the King of France himself had a better strut. I was, indeed, very attentive to my old friend's remarks, because I looked upon them as a piece of natural criticism, and was well pleased to hear him at the conclusion of almost every scene, telling me that he could not imagine how the play would end. One while he appeared much concerned about Andromache; and a little while after as much for Hermione: and was extremely puzzled to think what would become of Pyrrhus.

When Sir Roger saw Andromache's obstinate refusal

SIR ROGER AT THE PLAY

to her lover's importunities, he whispered me in the ear, that he was sure she would never have him; to which he added with a more than ordinary vehemence, you cannot imagine, sir, what it is to have to do with a widow. Upon Pyrrhus his threatening afterwards to leave her, the knight shook his head, and muttered to himself, Ay, do if you can. This part dwelt so much upon my friend's imagination, that at the close of the third act, as I was thinking of something else, he whispered in my ear, 'These widows, sir, are the most perverse creatures in the world. But pray (says he) you that are a critic, is this play according to your dramatic rules, as you call them? Should your people in tragedy always talk to be understood? Why, there is not a single sentence in this play that I do not know the meaning of.'

The fourth act very luckily began before I had time to give the old gentleman an answer; 'Well (says the knight, sitting down with great satisfaction) I suppose we are now to see Hector's ghost.' He then renewed his attention, and from time to time fell a praising the widow. He made, indeed, a little mistake as to one of her pages, whom, at his first entering, he took for Astyanax; but he quickly set himself right in that particular, though, at the same time, he owned he should have been very glad to have seen the little boy, 'who,' says he, 'must needs be a very fine child by the account that is given of him.' Upon Hermione's going off with a menace to Pyrrhus, the audience gave a loud clap; to which Sir Roger added, 'On my word, a notable young baggage!'

As there was a very remarkable silence and stillness in the audience during the whole action, it was natural for them to take the opportunity of the intervals between the acts to express their opinion of the players and of their respective parts. Sir Roger hearing a cluster of them praise Orestes, struck in with them, and told them that he thought his friend Pylades was a very

JOSEPH ADDISON

sensible man; as they were afterwards applauding Pyrrhus, Sir Roger put in a second time, 'And let me tell you (says he) though he speaks but little, I like the old fellow in whiskers as well as any of them.' Captain Sentry, seeing two or three wags who sat near us lean with an attentive ear towards Sir Roger, and fearing lest they should smoke the knight, plucked him by the elbow, and whispered something in his ear, that lasted till the opening of the fifth act. The knight was wonderfully attentive to the account which Orestes gives of Pyrrhus his death, and at the conclusion of it told me it was such a bloody piece of work that he was glad it was not done upon the stage. Seeing afterwards Orestes in his raving fit, he grew more than ordinary serious, and took occasion to moralize (in his way) upon an evil conscience, adding that 'Orestes, in his madness, looked as if he saw something.'

As we were the first that came into the house, so we were the last that went out of it; being resolved to have a clear passage for our old friend, whom we did not care to venture among the justling of the crowd. Sir Roger went out fully satisfied with his entertainment, and we guarded him to his lodgings in the same manner that we brought him to the playhouse; being highly pleased, for my own part, not only with the performance of the excellent piece which had been presented, but with the satisfaction which it had given to the good old man.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE MAN OF THE TOWN

My friend Will. Honeycomb values himself very much upon what he calls the knowledge of mankind, which has cost him many disasters in his youth; for Will. reckons every misfortune that he has met with among the women, and every rencounter among the men, as parts of his education, and fancies he should never have been the man he is, had not he broke windows, knocked down constables, and disturbed honest people with his midnight serenades, when he was a young fellow. The engaging in adventures of this nature Will. calls the studying of mankind ; and terms this knowledge of the town the knowledge of the world. Will. ingenuously confesses that for half his life his head ached every morning with reading of men overnight ; and at present comforts himself under certain pains which he endures from time to time that without them he could not have acquainted with the gallantries of the age. This Will. looks upon as the learning of a gentleman, and regards all other kinds of science as the accomplishments of one whom he calls a scholar, a bookish man, or a philosopher.

For these reasons Will. shines in mixed company, where he has the discretion not to go out of his depth, and has often a certain way of making his real ignorance appear a seeming one. Our club, however, has frequently caught him tripping, at which times they never spare him. For as Will. often insults us with the knowledge of the town, we sometimes take our revenge upon him by our knowledge of books.

He was last week producing two or three letters which he writ in his youth to a coquette lady. The raillery of them was natural, and well enough for a mere man of the town; but, very unluckily, several of the words were spelt wrong. Will. laught this off at

JOSEPH ADDISON

first as well as he could, but finding himself pushed on all sides, and especially by the templar, he told us, with a little passion, that he never liked pedantry in spelling, and that he spelt like a gentleman, and not like a scholar: upon this Will. had recourse to his old topic of showing the narrow-spiritedness, the pride, and ignorance of pedants; which he carried so far, that upon my retiring to my lodgings, I could not forbear throwing together such reflections as occurred to me upon that subject.

A man who has been brought up among books, and is able to ~~talk of nothing else~~, is a very indifferent companion, and what we call a pedant. But, methinks, we should enlarge the title, and give it every one that does not know how to think out of his profession and particular way of life. 6186

What is a great pedant than a mere man of the town? Bar him the play-houses, a catalogue of the reigning beauties, and an account of a few fashionable distempers that have befallen him, and you strike him dumb. How many a pretty gentleman's knowledge lies all within the verge of the court? He will tell you the names of the principal favourites, repeat the shrewd sayings of a man of quality, whisper an intrigue that is not yet blown upon by common fame; or, if the sphere of his observations is a little larger than ordinary, will perhaps enter into all the incidents, turns, and revolutions in a game of ombre. When he has gone thus far, he has shown you the whole circle of his accomplishments, his parts are drained, and he is disabled from any further conversation. What are these but rank pedants? and yet these are the men who value themselves most on their exemption from the pedantry of colleges.

I might here mention the military pedant, who always talks in a camp, and is storming towns, making lodgments, and fighting battles from one end of the year to the other. Everything he speaks smells of gunpowder; if you take away his artillery from him,

THE MAN OF THE TOWN

he has not a word to say for himself. I might likewise mention the law pedant, that is perpetually putting cases, repeating the transactions of Westminster Hall, wrangling with you upon the most indifferent circumstances of life, and not to be convinced of the distance of a place, or of the most trivial point in conversation, but by dint of argument. The state pedant is wrapped up in news, and lost in politics. If you mention either of the kings of Spain or Poland, he talks very notably; but if you go out of the gazette, you drop him. In short, a mere courtier, a mere soldier, a mere scholar, a mere anything, is an insipid pedantic character, and equally ridiculous.

Of all the species of pedants, which I have mentioned, the book pedant is much the most supportable; he has at least an exercised understanding, and a head which is full though confused, so that a man who converses with him may often receive from him hints of things that are worth knowing, and what he may possibly turn to his own advantage, though they are of little use to the owner. The worst kind of pedants among learned men are such as are naturally endowed with a very small share of common sense, and have read a great number of books without taste or distinction.

The truth of it is, learning, like travelling and all other methods of improvement, as it finishes good sense, so it makes a silly man ten thousand times more insufferable, by supplying variety of matter to his impertinence, and giving him an opportunity of abounding in absurdities.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

I WAS last week taking a solitary walk in the garden of Lincoln's Inn (a favour that is indulged me by several of the benchers who are my intimate friends, and grown old with me in this neighbourhood,) when, according to the nature of men in years, who have made but little progress in the advancement of their fortune or their fame, I was repining at the sudden rise of many persons who are my juniors, and indeed at the unequal distribution of wealth, honour, and all other blessings of life. I was lost in this thought, when the night air came upon me, and drew my mind into a far more agreeable contemplation. The heaven above me appeared in all its glories, and presented me with such an hemisphere of stars, as made the most agreeable prospect imaginable to one who delights in the study of nature. It happened to be a freezing night, which had purified the whole body of air into such a bright, transparent æther, as made every constellation visible; and at the same time gave such a particular glowing to the stars, that I thought it the richest sky I had ever seen. I could not behold a scene so wonderfully adorned and lighted up, (if I may be allowed that expression,) without suitable meditations on the Author of such illustrious and amazing objects. For on these occasions, philosophy suggests motives to religion, and religion adds pleasures to philosophy.

As soon as I had recovered my usual temper and serenity of soul, I retired to my lodgings with the satisfaction of having passed away a few hours in the proper employments of a reasonable creature, and promising myself that my slumbers would be sweet. I no sooner fell into them, but I dreamed a dream, or saw a vision, (for I knew not which to call it,) that seemed to rise out of my evening meditation, and had something in it so solemn and serious, that I cannot

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

forbear communicating it; though I must confess, the wildness of imagination (which in a dream is always loose and irregular) discovers itself too much in several parts of it.

Methought I saw the azure sky diversified with the same glorious luminaries which had entertained me a little before I fell asleep. I was looking very attentively on that sign in the heavens which is called by the name of the Balance, when on a sudden there appeared in it an extraordinary light, as if the sun should rise at midnight. By its increasing in breadth and lustre, I soon found that it approached towards the earth; and at length could discern something like a shadow hovering in the midst of a great glory, which in a little time after I distinctly perceived to be the figure of a woman. I fancied at first it might have been the Angel or Intelligence that guided the constellation from which it descended; but upon a nearer view, I saw about her all the emblems with which the Goddess of Justice is usually described. Her countenance was unspeakably awful and majestic, but exquisitely beautiful to those whose eyes were strong enough to behold it; her smiles transported with rapture, her frowns terrified to despair. She held in her hand a mirror endowed with the same qualities as that which the painters put into the hand of Truth.

There streamed from it a light, which distinguished itself from all the splendours that surrounded her, more than a flash of lightning shines in the midst of day-light. As she moved it in her hand, it brightened the heavens, the air, or the earth. When she had descended so low as to be seen and heard by mortals, to make the pomp of her appearance more supportable, she threw darkness and clouds about her, that tempered the light into a thousand beautiful shades and colours, and multiplied that lustre, which was before too strong and dazzling, into a variety of milder glories.

In the mean time the world was in an alarm, and

JOSEPH ADDISON

all the inhabitants of it gathered together upon a spacious plain; so that I seemed to have all the species before my eyes. A voice was heard from the clouds, declaring the intention of this visit, which was to restore and appropriate to every one living what was his due. The fear and hope, joy and sorrow, which appeared in that great assembly after this solemn declaration, are not to be expressed. The first edict was then pronounced, 'That all titles and claims to riches and estates, or to any parts of them, should be immediately vested in the rightful owner.' Upon this, the inhabitants of the earth held up the instruments of their tenure, whether in parchment, paper, wax, or any other form of conveyance; and as the goddess moved the mirror of truth which she held in her hand, so that the light which flowed from it fell upon the multitude, they examined the several instruments by the beams of it. The rays of this mirror had a particular quality of setting fire to all forgery and falsehood. The blaze of papers, the melting of seals, and crackling of parchments, made a very odd scene. The fire very often ran through two or three lines only, and then stopped; though I could not but observe, that the flame chiefly broke out among the interlineations and codicils. The light of the mirror as it was turned up and down, pierced into all the dark corners and recesses of the universe, and by that means detected many writings and records which had been hidden or buried by time, chance, or design. This occasioned a wonderful revolution among the people. At the same time, the spoils of extortion, fraud, and robbery, with all the fruits of bribery and corruption, were thrown together into a prodigious pile, that almost reached to the clouds, and was called the Mount of Restitution; to which all injured persons were invited, to receive what belonged to them.

One might see crowds of people in tattered garments come up, and change clothes with others that were dressed with lace and embroidery. Several who were

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

plums, or very near it, became men of moderate fortunes; and many others, who were overgrown in wealth and possessions, had no more left than what they usually spent. What moved my concern most was, to see a certain street of the greatest credit in Europe from one end to the other become bankrupt.

Men were no sooner settled in their right to their possessions but there was another order proclaimed, 'That all posts of dignity and honour in the universe should be conferred on persons of the greatest merit, abilities, and perfection.' The handsome, the strong, and the wealthy, immediately pressed forward; but not being able to bear the splendour of the mirror which played upon their faces, they immediately fell back among the crowd: but as the goddess tried the multitude by her glass, as the eagle does its young ones by the lustre of the sun, it was remarkable, that every one turned away his face from it, who had not distinguished himself either by virtue, knowledge, or capacity in business, either military or civil. This select assembly was drawn up in the centre of a prodigious multitude, which was diffused on all sides, and stood observing them, as idle people use to gather about a regiment that are exercising their arms. They were drawn up in three bodies: in the first, were men of virtue; in the second, men of knowledge; and in the third, the men of business. It was impossible to look at the first column without a secret veneration, their aspects were so sweetened with humanity, raised with contemplation, emboldened with resolution, and adorned with the most agreeable airs, which are those that proceed from secret habits of virtue. I could not but take notice, that there were many faces among them which were unknown, not only to the multitude, but even to several of their own body.

In the second column, consisting of the men of knowledge, there had been great disputes before they fell into the ranks, which they did not do at last without positive command of the goddess who presided over the assembly.

JOSEPH ADDISON

She had so ordered it, that men of the greatest genius and strongest sense were placed at the head of the column: behind these were such as had formed their minds very much on the thoughts and writings of others. In the rear of the column, were men who had more wit than sense, or more learning than understanding. All living authors of any value were ranged in one of these classes; but I must confess, I was very much surprised to see a great body of editors, critics, commentators, and grammarians, meet with so very ill a reception. They had formed themselves into a body, and with a great deal of arrogance demanded the first station in the column of knowledge; but the goddess, instead of complying with their request, clapped them all into liveries, and bid them know themselves for no other but lacqueys of the learned.

The third column were men of business, and consisting of persons in military and civil capacities. The former marched out from the rest, and placed themselves in the front, at which the other shook their heads at them, but did not think fit to dispute the post with them. I could not but make several observations upon this last column of people; but I have certain private reasons why I do not think fit to communicate them to the public. In order to fill up all the posts of honour, dignity, and profit, there was a draught made out of each column, of men who were masters of all three qualifications in some degree, and were preferred to stations of the first rank. The second draught was made out of such as were possessed of any two of the qualifications, who were disposed of in stations of a second dignity. Those who were left, and were endowed only with one of them, had their suitable posts. When this was over, there remained many places of trust and profit unfilled, for which there were fresh draughts made out of the surrounding multitude, who had any appearance of these excellencies, or were recommended by those who possessed them in reality.

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

All were surprised to see so many new faces in the most eminent dignities; and for my own part, I was very well pleased to see that all my friends either kept their present posts, or were advanced to higher.

The male world were dismissed by the Goddess of Justice, and disappeared, when on a sudden the whole plain was covered with women. So charming a multitude filled my heart with unspeakable pleasure; and as the celestial light of the mirror shone upon their faces, several of them seemed rather persons that descended in the train of the goddess, than such who were brought before her to their trial. The clack of tongues, and confusion of voices, in this new assembly, was so very great, that the goddess was forced to command silence several times, and with some severity, before she could make them attentive to her edicts. They were all sensible, that the most important affair among woman-kind was then to be settled, which every one knows to be the point of place. This had raised innumerable disputes among them, and put the whole sex into a tumult. Every one produced her claim, and pleaded her pretensions. Birth, beauty, wit, or wealth, were words that rung in my ears from all parts of the plain. Some boasted of the merit of their husbands; others, of their own power in governing them. Some pleaded their unspotted virginity; others, their numerous issue. Some valued themselves as they were the mothers, and others as they were the daughters, of considerable persons. There was not a single accomplishment unmentioned, or unpractised. The whole congregation was full of singing, dancing, tossing, ogling, squeaking, smiling, sighing, fanning, frowning, and all those irresistible arts which women put in practice to captivate the hearts of reasonable creatures. The goddess, to end this dispute, caused it to be proclaimed, 'That every one should take place according as she was more or less beautiful.' This declaration gave great satisfaction to the whole assembly, which immediately bridled up, and

JOSEPH ADDISON

appeared in all its beauties. Such as believed themselves graceful in their motion, found an occasion of falling back, advancing forward, or making a false step, that they might show their persons in the most becoming air. Such as had fine necks and bosoms were wonderfully curious to look over the heads of the multitude, and observe the most distant parts of the assembly. Several clapped their hands on their foreheads, as helping their sight to look upon the glories that surrounded the goddess, but in reality to show fine hands and arms. The ladies were yet better pleased when they heard, that in the decision of this great controversy, each of them should be her own judge, and take her place according to her own opinion of herself, when she consulted her looking-glass.

The goddess then let down the mirror of truth in a golden chain, which appeared larger in proportion as it descended and approached nearer to the eyes of the beholders. It was the particular property of this looking-glass to banish all false appearances, and show people what they are. The whole woman was represented, without regard to the usual external features which were made entirely conformable to their real characters. In short, the most accomplished (taking in the whole circle of female perfections) were the most beautiful; and the most defective, the most deformed. The goddess so varied the motion of the glass, and placed it in so many different lights, that each had an opportunity of seeing herself in it.

It is impossible to describe the rage, the pleasure, or astonishment, that appeared in each face upon its representation in the mirror: multitudes started at their own form, and would have broke the glass if they could have reached it. Many saw their blooming features wither as they looked upon them, and their self-admiration turned into a loathing and abhorrence. The lady who was thought so agreeable in her anger, and was so often celebrated for a woman of fire and

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

spirit, was frightened at her own image, and fancied she saw a fury in the glass. The interested mistress beheld a harpy, and the subtle jilt a sphinx. I was very much troubled in my own heart, to see such a destruction of fine faces; but at the same time had the pleasure of seeing several improved, which I had before looked upon as the greatest master-pieces of nature. I observed, that some few were so humble, as to be surprised at their own charms; and that many a one, who had lived in the retirement and severity of a vestal, shined forth in all the graces and attractions of a siren. I was ravished at the sight of a particular image in the mirror, which I think the most beautiful object that my eyes ever beheld. There was something more than human in her countenance: her eyes were so full of light, that they seemed to beautify everything they looked upon. Her face was enlivened with such a florid bloom, as did not so properly seem the mark of health, as of immortality. Her shape, her nature, and her mien, were such as distinguished her even there where the whole fair sex was assembled.

I was impatient to see the lady represented by so divine an image, whom I found to be the person that stood at my right hand, and in the same point of view with myself. This was a little old woman, who in her prime had been about five foot high, though at present shrunk to about three quarters of that measure. Her natural aspect was puckered up with wrinkles, and her head covered with grey hairs. I had observed all along an innocent cheerfulness in her face, which was now heightened into rapture as she beheld herself in the glass. It was an odd circumstance in my dream, (but I cannot forbear relating it,) I conceived so great an inclination towards her, that I had thoughts of discoursing her upon the point of marriage, when on a sudden she was carried from me; for the word was now given, that all who were pleased with their own images, should separate, and place themselves at the head of their sex.

JOSEPH ADDISON

This detachment was afterwards divided into three bodies, consisting of maids, wives, and widows: the wives being placed in the middle, with the maids on the right, and widows on the left; though it was with difficulty that these two last bodies were hindered from falling into the centre. This separation of those, who liked their real selves, not having lessened the number of the main body so considerably as it might have been wished, the goddess, after having drawn up her mirror, thought fit to make new distinctions among those who did not like the figure which they saw in it. She made several wholesome edicts, which are slipped out of my mind; but there was one which dwelt upon me, as being very extraordinary in its kind and executed with great severity. Its design was to make an example of those who are very severe on the conduct of others. The sentence, therefore, the goddess pronounced was, 'That all females addicted to censoriousness and detraction, should lose the use of speech;' a punishment which would be the most grievous to the offender, and (what should be the end of all punishments) effectual for rooting out the crime. Upon this edict, which was as soon executed as published, the noise of the assembly very considerably abated. It was a melancholy spectacle, to see so many who had the reputation of rigid virtue struck dumb. A lady who stood by me, and saw my concern, told me, she wondered how I could be concerned for such a pack of ——. I found, by the shaking of her head, she was going to give me their characters; but by her saying no more, I perceived she had lost the command of her tongue. This calamity fell very heavy upon that part of women who are distinguished by the name of Prudes, a courtly word for female hypocrites, who have a short way to being virtuous, by showing that others are vicious.

This vision lasted till my usual hour of waking, which I did with some surprise, to find myself alone, after having been engaged almost a whole night in so

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

prodigious a multitude. I could not but reflect with wonder at the partiality and extravagance of my vision; which, according to my thoughts, has not done justice to the sex. If virtue in men is more venerable, it is in women more lovely; which Milton has very finely expressed in his *Paradise Lost*, where Adam, speaking of Eve, after having asserted his own pre-eminence, as being first in creation and internal faculties, breaks out into the following rapture:

—Yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do, or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
All higher knowledge in her presence falls
Degraded. Wisdom, in discourse with her,
Loses, discountenanced, and like folly shows.
Authority and reason on her wait,
As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally: and, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic placed.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

FROZEN WORDS

THERE are no books which I more delight in than in travels, especially those that describe remote countries, and give the writer an opportunity of showing his parts without incurring any danger of being examined or contradicted. Among all the authors of this kind, our renowned countryman Sir John Mandeville has distinguished himself by the copiousness of his invention and greatness of his genius. The second to Sir John I take to have been Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, a person of infinite adventure and unbounded imagination. One reads the voyages of these two great wits with as much astonishment as the travels of Ulysses in Homer, or of the Red-Cross Knight in Spenser. All is enchanted ground and fairyland.

I have got into my hands, by great chance, several manuscripts of these two eminent authors, which are filled with greater wonders than any of those they have communicated to the public; and indeed, were they not so well attested, would appear altogether improbable. I am apt to think the ingenious authors did not publish them with the rest of their works, lest they should pass for fictions and fables: a caution not unnecessary, when the reputation of their veracity was not yet established in the world. But as this reason has now no further weight, I shall make the public a present of these curious pieces at such times as I shall find myself unprovided with other subjects.

The present paper I intend to fill with an extract of Sir John's journal, in which that learned and worthy knight gives an account of the freezing and thawing of several short speeches which he made in the territories of Nova Zembla. I need not inform my reader, that the author of Hudibras alludes to this strange quality in that cold climate, when, speaking of abstract

FROZEN WORDS

notions clothed in a visible shape, he adds that apt simile,

Like words congealed in northern air.

Not to keep my reader any longer in suspense, the relation put into modern language is as follows:

‘ We were separated by a storm in the latitude of 73, insomuch that only the ship which I was in, with a Dutch and a French vessel, got safe into a creek of Nova Zembla. We landed, in order to refit our vessels and store ourselves with provisions. The crew of each vessel made themselves a cabin of turf and wood, at some distance from each other, to fence themselves against the inclemencies of the weather, which was severe beyond imagination. We soon observed that in talking to one another we lost several of our words, and could not hear one another at above two yards’ distance, and that too when we sat very near the fire. After much perplexity, I found that our words froze in the air before they could reach the ears of the person to whom they were spoken. I was soon confirmed in this conjecture, when, upon the increase of the cold, the whole company grew dumb, or rather deaf; for every man was sensible, as we afterwards found, that he spoke as well as ever; but the sounds no sooner took air, than they were condensed and lost. It was now a miserable spectacle to see us nodding and gaping at one another, every man talking, and no man heard. One might observe a seaman, that could hail a ship at a league distance, beckoning with his hands, straining his lungs, and tearing his throat, but all in vain.

—*Nec vox, nec verba, sequuntur.*

‘ We continued here three weeks in this dismal plight. At length, upon a turn of wind, the air about us began to thaw. Our cabin was immediately filled with a dry clattering sound, which I afterwards found to be the crackling of consonants that broke above our heads, and were often mixed with a gentle hissing,

JOSEPH ADDISON

which I imputed to the letter S, that occurs so frequently in the English tongue. I soon after felt a breeze of whispers rushing by my ear; for those being of a soft and gentle substance, immediately liquefied in the warm wind that blew across our cabin. These were soon followed by syllables and short words, and at length by entire sentences, that melted sooner or later, as they were more or less congealed; so that we now heard everything that had been spoken during the whole three weeks that we had been silent, if I may use that expression. It was now very early in the morning, and yet, to my surprise, I heard somebody say, 'Sir John, it is midnight, and time for the ship's crew to go to bed.' This I knew to be the pilot's voice, and upon recollecting myself, I concluded that he had spoken these words to me some days before, though I could not hear them before the present thaw. My reader will easily imagine how the whole crew was amazed to hear every man talking, and see no man opening his mouth. In the midst of this great surprise we were all in, we heard a volley of oaths and curses, lasting for a long while and uttered in a very hoarse voice, which I knew belonged to the boatswain, who was a very choleric fellow, and had taken his opportunity of cursing and swearing at me when he thought I could not hear him; for I had several times given him the strappado on that account, as I did not fail to repeat it for these his pious soliloquies when I got him on shipboard.

'I must not omit the names of several beauties in Wapping, which were heard every now and then, in the midst of a long sigh that accompanied them, as, Dear Kate! Pretty Mrs. Peggy! When shall I see my Sue again? This betrayed several amours which had been concealed till that time, and furnished us with a great deal of mirth in our return to England.

'When this confusion of voices was pretty well over, though I was afraid to offer at speaking, as fearing I should not be heard, I proposed a visit to the Dutch

FROZEN WORDS

cabin, which lay about a mile further up into the country. My crew were extremely rejoiced to find they had again recovered their hearing, though every man uttered his voice with the same apprehensions that I had done:

—*Et timide verba intermissa retentat.*

‘ At about half a mile’s distance from our cabin, we heard the groanings of a bear, which at first startled us; but upon inquiry we were informed by some of our company that he was dead, and now lay in salt, having been killed upon that very spot about a fortnight before in the time of the frost. Not far from the same place we were likewise entertained with some post-humous snarls and barkings of a fox.

‘ We at length arrived at the little Dutch settlement, and upon entering the room, found it filled with sighs that smelt of brandy, and several other unsavoury sounds that were altogether inarticulate. My valet, who was an Irishman, fell into so great a rage at what he heard, that he drew his sword; but not knowing where to lay the blame, he put it up again. We were stunned with these confused noises, but did not hear a single word till about half an hour after; which I ascribed to the harsh and obdurate sounds of that language, which wanted more time than ours to melt and become audible.

‘ After having here met with a very hearty welcome, we went to the French cabin, who, to make amends for their three weeks’ silence, were talking and disputing with greater rapidity and confusion than ever I heard in an assembly even of that nation. Their language, as I found, upon the first giving of the weather, fell asunder and dissolved. I was here convinced of an error into which I had before fallen; for I fancied, that for the freezing of the sound, it was necessary for it to be wrapped up, and, as it were, preserved in breath; but I found my mistake, when I heard the sound of a kit playing a minuet over our heads. I asked the occasion of it; upon which one of the company told

JOSEPH ADDISON

me, that it would play there above a week longer if the thaw continued; "For (says he) finding ourselves bereft of speech, we prevailed upon one of the company, who had this musical instrument about him, to play to us from morning to night; all which time we employed in dancing, in order to dissipate our chagrin, *et tuer le temps.*" "

Here Sir John gives very good philosophical reasons, why the kit could be heard during the frost; but as they are something prolix, I pass over them in silence, and shall only observe, that the honourable author seems, by his quotations, to have been well versed in the ancient poets, which perhaps raised his fancy above the ordinary pitch of historians, and very much contributed to the embellishment of his writings.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

THE CHARACTER OF AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive, I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold, am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward; work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard, is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigour.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed; we now turned to the right, then to the left, as we went forward he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. My dear Drybone, cries he, shaking my friend's hand, where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

fancied you were gone to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country. During the reply, I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black riband, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt; and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance: Pshaw, pshaw, Will, cried the figure, no more of that, if you love me: you know I hate flattery, on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do: but there are a great many honest fellows among them; and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants weeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. Ned, says he to me, Ned, says he, I'll hold gold to silver, I can tell where you were poaching last night.

Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow, cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company? Improved, replied the other; you shall know,—but let it go no farther,—a great secret—five hundred a year to begin with.—My lord's word of honour for it—his lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a tête-à-tête dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else. I fancy you forget, Sir, cried I, you told us but this moment

AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER

of your dining yesterday in town. Did I say so? replied he coolly; to be sure if I said so, it was so—dined in town: egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town: but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the bye, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that: We were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, an affected piece, but let it go no farther; a secret: well, there happened to be no assafoetida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say, done first, that—but dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till—but hearkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you.

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. His very dress, cries my friend, is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day, you find him in rags; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarcely a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence: but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED, WITH THAT OF HIS WIFE, HIS HOUSE AND FURNITURE

I AM apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who by their manner of returning the compliment appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, 'Blast me,' cries he, with an air of vivacity, 'I never saw the park so thin in my life before! There's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen.' No company! interrupted I peevishly; no company where there is such a crowd? why, man, there's too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company? 'Lord, my dear,' returned he, with the utmost good humour, 'you seem immensely chagrined: but blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED

the Creolan, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on't: I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of Allnight. A charming body of voice; but no more of that, she will give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature; I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship, let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar: I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret.'

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded, whether I delighted in prospects; to which answering in the affirmative, 'Then,' says he, 'I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my window: we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

keep my prospects at home, that my friends may visit me the oftener.'

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, who's there? My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand; to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady? 'Good troth,' replied she in a peculiar dialect, 'she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer.' 'My two shirts,' cried he in a tone that faltered with confusion, 'what does the idiot mean?' 'I ken what I mean weel enough,' replied the other: 'she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because——' 'Fire and fury,' no more of thy stupid explanations,' cried he; 'go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret.'

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs' arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once jannaped; a cradle in one corner, a lumber cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED

pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing. 'What do you think, Sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there's the true keeping in it; it is my own face, and though there happens to be no likeness, a Countess offered me a hundred for its fellow; I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical you know.'

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed all night at the gardens with the Countess, who was excessively fond of the horns. 'And, indeed, my dear,' added she, turning to her husband, 'his lordship drank your health in a bumper.'—'Poor Jack,' cries he, 'a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me; But I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, a——' 'Or what do you think, my dear,' interrupts the wife, 'of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?'—'The very thing,' replies he, 'it will eat best with some smart bottled beer: but be sure to let us have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat, that is country all over; extremely disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life.'

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase: the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mrs. Tibbs assuring me, that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

NATIONAL PREJUDICES

As I am one of that sauntering tribe of mortals, who spend the greatest part of their time in taverns, coffee-houses, and other places of public resort, I have thereby an opportunity of observing an infinite variety of characters, which, to a person of a contemplative turn, is a much higher entertainment than a view of all the curiosities of art or nature. In one of these my late rambles, I accidentally fell into the company of half a dozen gentlemen, who were engaged in a warm dispute about some political affair; the decision of which, as they were equally divided in their sentiments, they thought proper to refer to me, which naturally drew me in for a share of the conversation.

Amongst a multiplicity of other topics, we took occasion to talk of the different characters of the several nations of Europe; when one of the gentlemen, cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation in his own person, declared that the Dutch were a parcel of avaricious wretches; the French a set of flattering sycophants; that the Germans were drunken sots, and beastly gluttons; and the Spaniards proud, haughty, and surly tyrants; but that in bravery, generosity, clemency, and in every other virtue, the English excelled all the rest of the world.

This very learned and judicious remark was received with a general smile of approbation by all the company—all, I mean, but your humble servant; who, endeavouring to keep my gravity as well as I could, and reclining my head upon my arm, continued for some time in a posture of affected thoughtfulness, as if I had been musing on something else, and did not seem to attend to the subject of conversation; hoping by these means to avoid the disagreeable necessity of explaining

NATIONAL PREJUDICES

myself, and thereby depriving the gentleman of his imaginary happiness.

But my pseudo-patriot had no mind to let me escape so easily. Not satisfied that his opinion should pass without contradiction, he was determined to have it ratified by the suffrage of every one in the company; for which purpose addressing himself to me with an air of inexpressible confidence, he asked me if I was not of the same way of thinking. As I am never forward in giving my opinion, especially when I have reason to believe that it will not be agreeable; so, when I am obliged to give it, I always hold it for a maxim to speak my real sentiments. I therefore told him that, for my own part, I should not have ventured to talk in such peremptory strain, unless I had made the tour of Europe, and examined the manners of these several nations with great care and accuracy: that, perhaps, a more impartial judge would not scruple to affirm that the Dutch were more frugal and industrious, the French more temperate and polite, the Germans more hardy and patient of labour and fatigue, and the Spaniards more staid and sedate, than the English; who, though undoubtedly brave and generous, were at the same time rash, headstrong, and impetuous; too apt to be elated with prosperity, and to despond in adversity.

I could easily perceive that all the company began to regard me with a jealous eye before I had finished my answer, which I had no sooner done, than the patriotic gentleman observed, with a contemptuous sneer, that he was greatly surprised how some people could have the conscience to live in a country which they did not love, and to enjoy the protection of a government to which in their hearts they were inveterate enemies. Finding that by this modest declaration of my sentiments I had forfeited the good opinion of my companions, and given them occasion to call my political principles in question, and well knowing that it was in vain to argue with men who were so very full of

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

themselves, I threw down my reckoning and retired to my own lodgings, reflecting on the absurd and ridiculous nature of national prejudice and prepossession.

Among all the famous sayings of antiquity, there is none that does greater honour to the author, or affords greater pleasure to the reader (at least if he be a person of a generous and benevolent heart), than that of the philosopher, who, being asked what 'countryman he was,' replied, that he was, 'a citizen of the world.'—How few are there to be found in modern times who can say the same, or whose conduct is consistent with such a profession! We are now become so much Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, or Germans, that we are no longer citizens of the world; so much the natives of one particular spot, or members of one petty society, that we no longer consider ourselves as the general inhabitants of the globe, or members of that grand society which comprehends the whole human kind.

Did these prejudices prevail only among the meanest and lowest of the people, perhaps they might be excused, as they have few, if any, opportunities of correcting them by reading, travelling, or conversing with foreigners; but the misfortune is that they infect the minds, and influence the conduct, even of our gentlemen; of those, I mean, who have every title to this appellation but an exemption from prejudice, which, however, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the characteristical mark of a gentleman; for let a man's birth be ever so high, his station ever so exalted, or his fortune ever so large, yet if he is not free from national and other prejudices, I should make bold to tell him that he had a low and vulgar mind, and had no just claim to the character of a gentleman. And in fact, you will always find that those are most apt to boast of national merit, who have little or no merit of their own to depend on; than which, to be sure, nothing is more natural: the slender vine twists around the sturdy oak, for no other

NATIONAL PREJUDICES

reason in the world but because it has not strength sufficient to support itself.

Should it be alleged in defence of national prejudice, that it is the natural and necessary growth of love to our country, and that therefore the former cannot be destroyed without hurting the latter, I answer, that this is a gross fallacy and delusion. That it is the growth of love to our country, I will allow; but that it is the natural and necessary growth of it, I absolutely deny. Superstition and enthusiasm too are the growth of religion; but who ever took it in his head to affirm that they are the necessary growth of this noble principle? They are, if you will, the bastard sprouts of this heavenly plant, but not its natural and genuine branches, and may safely enough be lopped off, without doing any harm to the parent stock: nay, perhaps, till once they are lopped off, this goodly tree can never flourish in perfect health and vigour.

Is it not very possible that I may love my own country, without hating the natives of other countries? that I may exert the most heroic bravery, the most undaunted resolution, in defending its laws and liberty, without despising all the rest of the world as cowards and poltroons? Most certainly it is; and if it were not—But why need I suppose what is absolutely impossible?—But if it were not, I must own, I should prefer the title of the ancient philosopher, viz. a citizen of the world to that of an Englishman, a Frenchman, a European, or to any other appellation whatever.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

I AM fond of amusement in whatever company it is to be found; and wit, though dressed in rags, is ever pleasing to me. I went some days ago to take a walk in St. James's Park, about the hour in which company leave to go to dinner. There were but few in the walks, and those who stayed seemed by their looks rather more willing to forget that they had an appetite than gain one. I sat down on one of the benches, at the other end of which was seated a man in very shabby clothes.

We continued to groan, to hem, and to cough, as usual upon such occasions; and at last ventured upon conversation. 'I beg pardon, Sir,' cried I, 'but I think I have seen you before; your face is familiar to me.' 'Yes, Sir,' replied he, 'I have a good familiar face, as my friends tell me. I am as well known in every town in England as the dromedary, or live crocodile. You must understand, Sir, that I have been these sixteen years Merry Andrew to a puppet-show: last Bartholomew fair my master and I quarrelled, beat each other, and parted; he to sell his puppets to the pin-cushion-makers in Rosemary-lane, and I to starve in St. James's Park.'

'I am sorry, Sir, that a person of your appearance should labour under any difficulties.'—'O Sir,' returned he, 'my appearance is very much at your service; but, though I cannot boast of eating much, yet there are few that are merrier: if I had twenty thousand a year I should be very merry; and, thank the Fates though not worth a groat, I am very merry still. If I have three pence in my pocket, I never refuse to be my three half-pence; and if I have no money, I never scorn to be treated by any that are kind enough to pay my reckoning. What think you, Sir, of a steak and a tankard? You shall treat me now; and I will treat you again

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

when I find you in the Park in love with eating, and without money to pay for a dinner.'

As I never refuse a small expense for the sake of a merry companion, we instantly adjourned to a neighbouring alehouse, and in a few moments had a frothing tankard and a smoking steak spread on the table before us. It is impossible to express how much the sight of such good cheer improved my companion's vivacity. 'I like this dinner, Sir,' says he, 'for three reasons: first, because I am naturally fond of beef; secondly, because I am hungry; and, thirdly and lastly, because I get it for nothing: no meat eats so sweet as that for which we do not pay.'

He therefore now fell to, and his appetite seemed to correspond with his inclination. After dinner was over, he observed that the steak was tough; 'and yet, Sir,' returns he, 'bad as it was, it seemed a rumpsteak to me. O the delights of poverty and a good appetite! We beggars are the very fondlings of nature; the rich she treats like an arrant step-mother: they are pleased with nothing; cut a steak from what part you will, and it is insupportably tough; dress it up with pickles, and even pickles cannot procure them an appetite. But the whole creation is filled with good things for the beggar: Calvert's butt out-tastes champagne, and Sedgely's home-brewed excels Tokay. Joy, joy, my blood, though our estates lie nowhere, we have fortunes wherever we go. If an inundation sweeps away half the grounds of Cornwall, I am content; I have no lands there: if the stocks sink, that gives me no uneasiness; I am no Jew.' The fellow's vivacity, joined to his poverty, I own, raised my curiosity to know something of his life and circumstances; and I entreated that he would indulge my desire. 'That I will, Sir,' said he, 'and welcome; only let us drink to prevent our sleeping; let us have another tankard while we are awake: let us have another tankard; for, ah, how charming a tankard looks when full!

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

‘ You must know, then, that I am very well descended; my ancestors have made some noise in the world; for my mother cried oysters, and my father beat a drum: I am told we have even had some trumpeters in our family. Many a nobleman cannot show so respectable a genealogy; but that is neither here nor there: as I was their only child, my father designed to breed me up to his own employment, which was that of a drummer to a puppet-show. Thus the whole employment of my younger years was that of interpreter to Punch and King Solomon in all his glory. But though my father was very fond of instructing me in beating all the marches and points of war, I made no very great progress, because I naturally had no ear for music; so that at the age of fifteen, I went and listed for a soldier. As I had ever hated beating a drum, so I soon found that I disliked carrying a musket also: neither the one trade nor the other were to my taste, for I was by nature fond of being a gentleman: besides, I was obliged to obey my captain; he has his will, I have mine, and you have yours: now I very reasonably concluded, that it was much more comfortable for a man to obey his own will than another’s.

‘ The life of a soldier soon therefore gave me the spleen; I asked leave to quit the service; but as I was tall and strong, my captain thanked me for my kind intention, and said, because he had a regard for me, we should not part. I wrote to my father a very dismal penitent letter, and desired that he would raise money to pay for my discharge; but the good man was as fond of drinking as I was (Sir, my service to you), and those who are fond of drinking never pay for other people’s discharges: in short, he never answered my letter. What could be done? If I have not money, said I to myself, to pay for my discharge, I must find an equivalent some other way; and that must be by running away. I deserted, and that answered my purpose every bit as well as if I had bought my discharge.

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

‘ Well, I was now fairly rid of my military employment; I sold my soldier’s clothes, bought worse, and in order not to be overtaken, took the most unfrequented roads possible. One evening as I was entering a village, I perceived a man, whom I afterwards found to be the curate of the parish, thrown from his horse in a miry road, and almost smothered in the mud. He desired my assistance; I gave it, and drew him out with some difficulty. He thanked me for my trouble, and was going off; but I followed him home, for I loved always to have a man thank me at his own door. The curate asked a hundred questions; as, whose son I was; from whence I came; and whether I would be faithful. I answered him greatly to his satisfaction; and gave myself one of the best characters in the world for sobriety (Sir, I have the honour of drinking your health), discretion, and fidelity. To make a long story short, he wanted a servant, and hired me. With him I lived but two months; we did not much like each other: I was fond of eating, and he gave me but little to eat; I loved a pretty girl, and the old woman, my fellow-servant, was ill-natured and ugly. As they endeavoured to starve me between them, I made a pious resolution to prevent their committing murder; I stole the eggs as soon as they were laid; I emptied every unfinished bottle that I could lay my hands on; whatever eatable came in my way was sure to disappear: in short, they found I would not do; so I was discharged one morning, and paid three shillings and sixpence for two months’ wages.

‘ While my money was getting ready, I employed myself in making preparations for my departure; two hens were hatching in an out-house; I went and took the eggs from habit, and not to separate the parents from the children, I lodged hens and all in my knapsack. After this piece of frugality, I returned to receive my money, and with my knapsack on my back, and a staff in my hand, I bade adieu with tears in my eyes to

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

my old benefactor. I had not gone far from the house when I heard behind me the cry of "Stop thief!" but this only increased my despatch: it would have been foolish to stop, as I knew the voice could not be levelled at me. But hold, I think I passed those two months at the curate's without drinking. Come, the times are dry, and may this be my poison if ever I spent two more pious, stupid months in all my life.

' Well, after travelling some days, whom should I light upon but a company of strolling players.—The moment I saw them at a distance, my heart warmed to them; I had a sort of natural love for every thing of the vagabond order: they were employed in settling their baggage, which had been overturned in a narrow way; I offered my assistance, which they accepted; and we soon became so well acquainted, that they took me as a servant. This was a paradise to me; they sang, danced, drank, eat, and travelled, all at the same time. By the blood of the Mirabels, I thought I had never lived till then; I grew as merry as a grig, and laughed at every word that was spoken. They liked me as much as I liked them: I was a very good figure, as you see; and though I was poor, I was not modest.

' I love a straggling life above all things in the world; sometimes good, sometimes bad; to be warm to-day, and cold to-morrow; to eat when one can get it, and drink when (the tankard is out) it stands before me. We arrived that evening at Tenterden, and took a large room at the Greyhound; where we resolved to exhibit *Romeo and Juliet*, with the funeral procession, the grave, and the garden scene. *Romeo* was to be performed by a gentleman from the Theatre Royal in Drury-lane; *Juliet*, by a lady who never appeared on any stage before: and I was to snuff the candles: all excellent in our way. We had figures enough, but the difficulty was how to dress them. The same coat that served *Romeo*, turned with the blue lining outwards, served for his friend

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

Mercutio: a large piece of crape sufficed at once for Juliet's petticoat and pall: a pestle and mortar from a neighbouring apothecary's answered all the purposes of a bell; and our landlord's own family, wrapped in white sheets, served to fill up the procession. In short, there were but three figures among us that might be said to be dressed with any propriety: I mean the nurse, the starved apothecary, and myself. Our performance gave universal satisfaction: the whole audience were enchanted with our powers.

'There is one rule by which a strolling player may be ever sure of success; that is, in our theatrical way of expressing it, to make a great deal of the character. To speak and act as in common life is not playing, nor is it what people come to see: natural speaking, like sweet wine, runs glibly over the palate, and scarcely leaves any taste behind it; but being high in a part resembles vinegar, which grates upon the taste, and one feels it while he is drinking. To please in town or country, the way is to cry, wring, cringe into attitudes, mark the emphasis, slap the pockets, and labour like one in the falling sickness; that is the way to work for applause; that is the way to gain it.

'As we received much reputation for our skill on this first exhibition, it was but natural for me to ascribe part of the success to myself: I snuffed the candles, and let me tell you that, without a candle-snuffer, the piece would have lost half its embellishments. In this manner we continued a fortnight, and drew tolerable houses, but the evening before our intended departure, we gave out our very best piece, in which all our strength was to be exerted. We had great expectations from this, and even doubled our prices, when behold one of the principal actors fell ill of a violent fever.—This was a stroke like thunder to our little company: they were resolved to go, in a body, to scold the man for falling sick at so inconvenient a time, and that too of a disorder that threatened to be expensive; I seized the moment,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

and offered to act the part myself in his stead. The case was desperate: they accepted my offer; and I accordingly sat down, with the part in my hand and a tankard before me (Sir, your health), and studied the character, which was to be rehearsed the next day, and played soon after.

‘I found my memory excessively helped by drinking: I learned my part with astonishing rapidity, and bade adieu to snuffing candles ever after. I found that nature had designed me for more noble employments, and I was resolved to take her when in the humour. We got together in order to rehearse; and I informed my companions, masters now no longer, of the surprising change I felt within me. “Let the sick man,” said I, “be under no uneasiness to get well again: I’ll fill his place to universal satisfaction; he may even die if he thinks proper; I’ll engage that he shall never be missed.” I rehearsed before them, strutted, ranted, and received applause. They soon gave out that a new actor of eminence was to appear, and immediately all the genteel places were bespoke. Before I ascended the stage, however, I concluded within myself, that as I brought money to the house I ought to have my share in the profits. “Gentlemen,” said I, addressing our company, “I don’t pretend to direct you; far be it from me to treat you with so much ingratitude: you have published my name in the bills with the utmost good-nature, and as affairs stand, cannot act without me: so, gentlemen, to show you my gratitude, I expect to be paid for my acting as much as any of you, otherwise I declare off; I’ll brandish my snuffers, and clip candles as usual.” This was a very disagreeable proposal, but they found that it was impossible to refuse it; it was irresistible, it was adamant; they consented, and I went on in king Bajazet; my frowning brows bound with a stocking stuffed into a turban, while on my captive arms I brandished a jack-chain. Nature seemed to have fitted me for the part; I was tall, and had a loud voice;

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

my very entrance excited universal applause; I looked round on the audience with a smile, and made a most low and graceful bow, for that is the rule among us. As it was a very passionate part, I invigorated my spirits with three full glasses (the tankard is almost out) of brandy. By Allah! it is almost inconceivable how I went through it. Tamerlane was but a fool to me; though he was sometimes loud enough too, yet I was still louder than he: but then, besides, I had attitudes in abundance: in general I kept my arms folded up thus, upon the pit of my stomach; it is the way at Drury-lane, and has always a fine effect. The tankard would sink to the bottom before I could get through the whole of my merits: in short, I came off like a prodigy; and such was my success, that I could ravish the laurels even from a sirloin of beef. The principal gentlemen and ladies of the town came to me, after the play was over, to compliment me upon my success; one praised my voice, another my person. "Upon my word," says the 'squire's lady, "he will make one of the finest actors in Europe; I say it, and I think I am something of a judge."—Praise in the beginning is agreeable enough, and we receive it as a favour; but when it comes in great quantities, we regard it only as a debt, which nothing but our merit could extort: instead of thanking them, I internally applauded myself. We were desired to give our piece a second time; we obeyed; and I was applauded even more than before.

'At last we left the town, in order to be at a horse-race at some distance from thence. I shall never think of Tenterden without tears of gratitude and respect. The ladies and gentlemen there, take my word for it, are very good judges of plays and actors. Come let us drink their healths, if you please, Sir. We quitted the town, I say; and there was a wide difference between my coming in and going out: I entered the town a candle-snuffer, and I quitted it a hero!—Such is the world; little to-day, and great to-morrow. I could say a great deal more

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

upon that subject, something truly sublime upon the ups and downs of fortune; but it would give us both the spleen, and so I shall pass it over.

‘The races were ended before we arrived at the next town, which was no small disappointment to our company; however, we were resolved to take all we could get. I played capital characters there too, and came off with my usual brilliancy. I sincerely believe I should have been the first actor in Europe, had my growing merit been properly cultivated; but there came an unkindly frost which nipped me in the bud, and levelled me once more down to the common standard of humanity. I played Sir Harry Wildair: all the country ladies were charmed: if I but drew out my snuff-box, the whole house was in a roar of rapture; when I exercised my cudgel, I thought they would have fallen into convulsions.

‘There was here a lady, who had received an education of nine months in London, and this gave her pretensions to taste, which rendered her the indisputable mistress of the ceremonies wherever she came. She was informed of my merits; everybody praised me; yet she refused at first going to see me perform: she could not conceive, she said, any thing but stuff from a stroller; talked something in praise of Garrick, and amazed the ladies with her skill in enunciation, tones, and cadences; she was at last, however, prevailed upon to go; and it was privately intimated to me what a judge was to be present at my new exhibition. However, no way intimidated, I came on in Sir Harry, one hand stuck in my breeches, and the other in my bosom, as usual at Drury-lane; but instead of looking at me, I perceived the whole audience had their eyes turned upon the lady who had been nine months in London; from her they expected the decision which was to secure the general’s truncheon in my hand, or sink me down into a theatrical letter-carrier. I opened my snuff-box, took snuff; the lady was solemn, and so were the rest; I

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

broke my cudgel on Alderman Smuggler's back; still gloomy, melancholy all, the lady groaned and shrugged her shoulders: I attempted, by laughing myself, to excite at least a smile; but the devil a cheek could I perceive wrinkled into sympathy; I found it would not do. All my good-humour now became forced; my laughter was converted into hysteric grinning; and while I pretended spirits, my eye showed the agony of my heart: in short, the lady came with an intention to be displeased, and displeased she was; my fame expired; I am here, and (the tankard is no more!)

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

MAD DOGS

INDULGENT Nature seems to have exempted this island from many of those epidemic evils which are so fatal in other parts of the world. A want of rain but for a few days beyond the expected season in China, spreads famine, desolation and terror, over the whole country; the winds that blow from the brown bosom of the western desert are impregnated with death in every gale; but, in this fortunate land of Britain, the inhabitant courts health in every breeze, and the husbandman ever sows in joyful expectation.

But though the nation be exempt from real evils, think not, my friend, that it is more happy on this account than others. They are afflicted, it is true, with neither famine nor pestilence, but then there is a disorder peculiar to the country, which every season makes strange ravages among them; it spreads with pestilential rapidity, and infects almost every rank of people; what is still more strange, the natives have no name for this peculiar malady, though well known to foreign physicians by the appellation of the *epidemic terror*.

A season is never known to pass in which the people are not visited by this cruel calamity in one shape or another, seemingly different though ever the same: one year it issues from a baker's shop in the shape of a six-penny loaf; the next, it takes the appearance of a comet with a fiery tail; a third, it threatens like a flat-bottomed boat; and a fourth, it carries consternation at the bite of a mad dog. The people, when once infected, lose their relish for happiness, saunter about with looks of despondency, ask after the calamities of the day, and receive no comfort but in heightening each other's distress. It is insignificant how remote or near, how weak or powerful the objects of terror may be; when once they resolve to fright and be frightened, the merest trifles sow

MAD DOGS

consternation and dismay: each proportions his fears, not to the object, but to the dread he discovers in the countenance of others; for when once the fermentation is begun, it goes on of itself, though the original cause be discontinued which first set it in motion.

A dread of mad dogs is the *epidemic terror* which now prevails; and the whole nation is at present actually groaning under the malignity of its influence. The people sally from their houses with that circumspection which is prudent in such as expect a mad dog at every turning. The physician publishes his prescription, the beadle prepares his halter, and a few of unusual bravery arm themselves with boots and buff gloves, in order to face the enemy if he should offer to attack them. In short, the whole people stand bravely upon their defence, and seem, by their present spirit, to show a resolution of not being tamely bit by mad dogs any longer.

Their manner of knowing whether a dog be mad or not, somewhat resembles the ancient European custom of trying witches. The old woman suspected was tied hand and foot, and thrown into the water. If she swam, then she was instantly carried off to be burnt for a witch; if she sank, then indeed she was acquitted of the charge, but drowned in the experiment. In the same manner a crowd gathers round a dog suspected of madness, and they begin by teasing the devoted animal on every side; if he attempts to stand upon the defensive and bite, then he is unanimously found guilty, for a mad dog always snaps at every thing; if, on the contrary, he strives to escape by running away, then he can expect no compassion, for mad dogs always run straight forward before them.

It is pleasant enough for a neutral being like me, who has no share in these ideal calamities, to mark the stages of this national disease. The terror at first feebly enters with a disregarded story of a little dog, that had gone through a neighbouring village, that

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

was thought to be mad by several that had seen him. The next account comes, that a mastiff ran through a certain town, and had bit five geese, which immediately ran mad, foamed at the bill, and died in great agony soon after. Then comes an affecting history of a little boy bit in the leg, and gone down to be dipt in the salt water. When the people have sufficiently shuddered at that, they are next congealed with a frightful account of a man who was said lately to have died from a bite he had received some years before. This relation only prepares the way for another still more hideous, as how the master of a family, with seven small children, were all bit by a mad lapdog; and how the poor father first perceived the infection, by calling for a draught of water, where he saw the lapdog swimming in the cup.

When epidemic terror is thus once excited, every morning comes loaded with some new disaster: as, in stories of ghosts, each loves to hear the account, though it only serves to make him uneasy, so here each listens with eagerness, and adds to the tidings new circumstances of peculiar horror. A lady, for instance, in the country, of very weak nerves, has been frightened by the barking of a dog; and this, alas! too frequently happens. The story soon is improved and spreads, that a mad dog had frightened a lady of distinction. These circumstances begin to grow terrible before they have reached the neighbouring village, and there the report is, that a lady of quality was bit by a mad mastiff. This account every moment gathers new strength; and grows more dismal as it approaches the capital; and by the time it has arrived in town, the lady is described, with wild eyes, foaming mouth, running mad upon all-fours, barking like a dog, biting her servants, and at last smothered between two beds by the advice of her doctors; while the mad mastiff is in the meantime ranging the whole country over, slavering at the mouth, and seeking whom he may devour.

My landlady, a good-natured woman, but a little

MAD DOGS

credulous, waked me some mornings ago before her usual hour, with horror and astonishment in her looks; she desired me, if I had any regard for my safety to keep within; for a few days ago so dismal an accident had happened, as to put all the world upon their guard. A mad dog down in the country, she assured me, had bit a farmer, who soon becoming mad, ran into his own yard, and bit a fine brindled cow; the cow quickly became as mad as the man, began to foam at the mouth, and raising herself up, walked about on her hind legs, sometimes barking like a dog, and sometimes attempting to talk like the farmer. Upon examining the grounds of this story, I found my landlady had it from one neighbour, who had it from another neighbour, who heard it from very good authority.

Were most stories of this nature thoroughly examined, it would be found that numbers of such as have been said to suffer were no way injured; and that of those who have been actually bitten, not one in a hundred was bit by a mad dog. Such accounts in general, therefore, only serve to make the people miserable by false terrors, and sometimes fright the patient into actual phrenzy by creating those very symptoms they pretended to deplore.

But even allowing three or four to die in a season of this terrible death (and four is probably too large a concession), yet still it is not considered, how many are preserved in their health and in their property by this devoted animal's services. The midnight robber is kept at a distance; the insidious thief is often detected; the healthful chase repairs many a worn constitution; and the poor man finds in his dog a willing assistant, eager to lessen his toils, and content with the smallest retribution.

'A dog,' says one of the English poets, 'is an honest creature, and I am a friend to dogs.' Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest, a dog is the only animal that, leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

the friendship of man; to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure; for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation; no injuries can abate his fidelity; no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor; studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still a humble steadfast dependent; and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind then to torture this faithful creature, who has left the forest to claim the protection of man! how ungrateful a return to the trusty animal for all his services !

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

THE manner in which most writers begin their treatises on the use of language is generally thus: 'Language has been granted to man in order to discover his wants and necessities, so as to have them relieved by society. Whatever we desire, whatever we wish, it is but to clothe those desires or wishes in words, in order to fruition; the principal use of language, therefore,' say they, 'is to express our wants, so as to receive a speedy redress.'

Such an account as this may serve to satisfy grammarians and rhetoricians well enough, but men who know the world maintain very contrary maxims; they hold, and I think with some show of reason, that he who best knows how to conceal his necessity and desires is the most likely person to find redress; and that the true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them.

When we reflect on the manner in which mankind generally confer their favours, we shall find that they who seem to want them least are the very persons who most liberally share them. There is something so attractive in riches, that the large heap generally collects from the smaller; and the poor find as much pleasure in increasing the enormous mass, as the miser, who owns it, sees happiness in its increase. Nor is there in this any thing repugnant to the laws of true morality. Seneca himself allows, that in conferring benefits, the present should always be suited to the dignity of the receiver. Thus the rich receive large presents, and are thanked for accepting them. Men of middling stations are obliged to be content with presents something less; while the beggar, who may be truly said to want indeed, is well paid if a farthing rewards his warmest solicitations.

Every man who has seen the world, and has had his *ups and downs in life*, as the expression is, must have

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

frequently experienced the truth of this doctrine, and must know that to have much, or to seem to have it, is the only way to have more. Ovid finely compares a man of broken fortune to a falling column; the lower it sinks, the greater weight it is obliged to sustain. Thus, when a man has no occasion to borrow, he finds numbers willing to lend him. Should he ask his friend to lend him a hundred pounds, it is possible, from the largeness of his demand, he may find credit for twenty; but should he humbly only sue for a trifle, it is two to one whether he might be trusted for twopence. A certain young fellow at George's, whenever he had occasion to ask his friend for a guinea, used to prelude his request as if he wanted two hundred, and talked so familiarly of large sums, that none could ever think he wanted a small one. The same gentleman, whenever he wanted credit for a new suit from his tailor, always made a proposal in laced clothes: for he found by experience, that if he appeared shabby on these occasions, Mr. Lynch had taken an oath against trusting; or, what was every bit as bad, his foreman was out of the way, and would not be at home these two days. 6186/4343

There can be no inducement to reveal our wants, except to find pity, and by this means relief; but before a poor man opens his mind in such circumstances, he should first consider whether he is contented to lose the esteem of the person he solicits, and whether he is willing to give up friendship only to excite compassion. Pity and friendship are passions incompatible with each other, and it is impossible that both can reside in any breast for the smallest space, without impairing each other. Friendship is made up of esteem and pleasure; pity is composed of sorrow and contempt; the mind may for some time fluctuate between them, but it never can entertain both together. 928. 2808/ J43E

Yet, let it not be thought that I would exclude pity from the human mind. There are scarcely any who are not, in some degree, possessed of this pleasing softness;

ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

but it is at best but a short-lived passion, and seldom affords distress more than transitory assistance: with some it scarcely lasts from the first impulse till the hand can be put into the pocket; with others it may continue for twice that space, and on some extraordinary sensibility I have seen it operate for half an hour. But, however, last as it will, it generally produces but beggarly effects; and where, from this motive, we give a halfpenny, from others we give always pounds. In great distress, we sometimes, it is true, feel the influence of tenderness strongly; when the same distress solicits a second time, we then feel with diminished sensibility, but like the repetition of an echo, every new impulse becomes weaker, till at last our sensations lose every mixture of sorrow, and degenerate into downright contempt.

Jack Spindle and I were old acquaintance; but he's gone. Jack was bred in a counting-house, and his father dying just as he was out of his time left him a handsome fortune, and many friends to advise with. The restraint in which he had been brought up had thrown a gloom upon his temper, which some regarded as habitual prudence, and from such considerations, he had every day repeated offers of friendship. Those who had money were ready to offer him their assistance that way; and they who had daughters frequently, in the warmth of affection, advised him to marry. Jack, however, was in good circumstances; he wanted neither money, friends, nor a wife, and therefore modestly declined their proposals.

Some errors in the management of his affairs and several losses in trade, soon brought Jack to a different way of thinking; and he at last thought it his best way to let his friends know that their offers were at length acceptable. His first address was, therefore, to a scrivener, who had formerly made him frequent offers of money and friendship, at a time when, perhaps, he knew those offers would have been refused.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Jack, therefore, thought he might use his old friend without any ceremony; and, as a man confident of not being refused, requested the use of a hundred guineas for a few days, as he just then had an occasion for money. 'And pray, Mr. Spindle,' replied the scrivener, 'do you want all this money?'—'Want it, Sir,' says the other, 'if I did not want it, I should not have asked it.'—'I am sorry for that,' says the friend; 'for those who want money when they come to borrow, will want money when they should come to pay. To say the truth, Mr. Spindle, money is money now-a-days. I believe it is all sunk in the bottom of the sea, for my part; and he that has got a little is a fool if he does not keep what he has got.'

Not quite disconcerted by this refusal, our adventurer was resolved to apply to another, whom he knew to be the very best friend he had in the world. The gentleman whom he now addressed, received his proposal with all the affability that could be expected from generous friendship. 'Let me see, you want a hundred guineas; and, pray, dear Jack, would not fifty answer?'—'If you have but fifty to spare, Sir, I must be contented.'—'Fifty to spare! I do not say that, for I believe I have but twenty about me.'—'Then I must borrow the other thirty from some other friend.'—'And pray,' replied the friend, 'would it not be the best way to borrow the whole money from that other friend, and then one note will serve for all, you know? Lord, Mr. Spindle, make no ceremony at any time; you know I'm your friend, when you choose a bit of dinner or so. You, Tom, see the gentleman down. You won't forget to dine with us now and then? Your very humble servant.'

Distressed but not discouraged at this treatment, he was at last resolved to find that assistance from love, which he could not have from friendship. Miss Jenny Dismal had a fortune in her own hands, and she had already made all the advances that her sex's

ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

modesty would permit. He made his proposal, therefore, with confidence, but soon perceived, 'No bankrupt ever found the fair one kind.' Miss Jenny and Master Billy Galloon were lately fallen deeply in love with each other, and the whole neighbourhood thought it would soon be a match.

Every day now began to strip Jack of his former finery: his clothes flew piece by piece to the pawn-brokers; and he seemed at length equipped in the genuine mourning of antiquity. But still he thought himself secure from starving; the numberless invitations he had received to dine, even after his losses, were yet unanswered; he was, therefore, now resolved to accept of a dinner, because he wanted one; and in this manner he actually lived among his friends a whole week without being openly affronted. The last place I saw poor Jack was at the Rev. Dr. Gosling's. He had, as he fancied, just nicked the time, for he came in as the cloth was laying. He took a chair without being desired, and talked for some time without being attended to. He assured the company that nothing procured so good an appetite as a walk to White Conduit house, where he had been that morning. He looked at the table-cloth, and praised the figure of the damask; talked of a feast where he had been the day before, but that the venison was overdone. All this, however, procured the poor creature no invitation, and he was not yet sufficiently hardened to stay without being asked; wherefore, finding the gentleman of the house insensible to all his fetches, he thought proper at last to retire, and mend his appetite by a walk in the park.

You then, O ye beggars of my acquaintance, whether in rags or lace; whether in Kent-street, or the Mall; whether at the Smyrna or St. Giles's; might I advise you as a friend, never seem in want of the favour which you solicit. Apply to every passion but pity, for redress. You may find relief from vanity, from self-interest, or from avarice, but seldom from compassion. The very

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

eloquence of a poor man is disgusting; and that mouth which is opened even for flattery, is seldom expected to close without a petition.

If, then, you would ward off the gripe of poverty, pretend to be a stranger to her, and she will at least use you with ceremony. Hear not my advice, but that of Ofellus. If you be caught dining upon a half-penny porringer of pease soup and potatoes, praise the wholesomeness of your frugal repast. You may observe that Dr. Cheyne has prescribed pease broth for the gravel; hint that you are not one of those who are always making a god of your belly. If you are obliged to wear a flimsy stuff in the midst of winter, be the first to remark that stuffs are very much worn at Paris. If there be found some irreparable defects in any part of your equipage, which cannot be concealed by all the arts of sitting cross-legged, coaxing, or darning, say that neither you nor Samson Gideon were ever very fond of dress. Or if you be a philosopher, hint that Plato and Seneca are the tailors you choose to employ; assure the company that men ought to be content with a bare covering, since what is now so much the pride of some was formerly our shame. Horace will give you a Latin sentence fit for the occasion,

Toga, quæ defendere frigus,
Quamvis crassa, queat.

In short, however caught, do not give up, but ascribe to the frugality of your disposition what others might attribute to the narrowness of your circumstances, and appear rather to be a miser than a beggar. To be poor, and to seem poor, is a certain method never to rise. Pride in the great is hateful, in the wise it is ridiculous; beggarly pride is the only sort of vanity I can excuse.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

ON GOING A JOURNEY

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

‘ The fields his study, nature was his book.’

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticizing hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room and fewer incumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

‘ a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper solitude is sweet.’

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

‘ May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair’d,’

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a

WILLIAM HAZLITT

three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges head-long into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like 'sunken wrack and sumless treasures,' burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull common-places, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. 'Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!' I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me 'very stuff of the conscience.' Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. 'Out upon such half-faced fellowship,' say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that 'he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time.' So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively

ON GOING A JOURNEY

conversation by fits and starts. 'Let me have a companion of my way,' says Sterne, 'were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines.' It is beautifully said; but, in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for this synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud, which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humour. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to

WILLIAM HAZLITT

cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered), is a task to which few are competent. We must 'give it an understanding, but no tongue.' My old friend C[oleridge], however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. 'He talked far above singing.' If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden. They had 'that fine madness in them which our first poets had'; and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following:—

' Here be woods as green
As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
Face of the curled streams, with flow'rs as many
As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
Arbours o'ergrown with woodbine, caves and dells;
Choose where thou wilt, whilst I sit by and sing,
Or gather rushes to make many a ring
For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest.'

Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*.

Had I words and images at command like these, I

ON GOING A JOURNEY

would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot:—I must have time to collect myself.

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects; it should be reserved for Table-talk. L[amb] is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation of friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavour of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at approach of night-fall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to ‘take one’s ease at one’s inn’! These eventful moments in our lives’ history are too precious, too full of solid, heart-felt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea—

‘The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,’

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal-cutlet! Sancho in such a situation once fixed upon cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then, in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen getting ready for the gentleman in the parlour. *Procul, O procul este*

WILLIAM HAZLITT

profani ! These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathise with him, and he breaks no squares. How I love to see the camps of the gypsies, and to sigh my soul into that sort of life. If I express this feeling to another, he may qualify and spoil it with some objection. I associate nothing with my travelling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having some one with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world; but your 'unhoused free condition is put into circumscription and confine.' The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—'lord of one's self, uncumber'd with a name.' Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweet-breads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlour*! One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions. We baffle

ON GOING A JOURNEY

prejudice and disappoint conjecture ; and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed common-places that we appear in the world ; an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society ! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns—sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham-common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin's engravings of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in the boat between me and the twilight—at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia*, which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day ; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madame D'Arblay's *Camilla*. It was on the tenth of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise*, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birth-day, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham ; and on passing a certain point you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with

WILLIAM HAZLITT

'green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks' below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time 'glittered green with sunny showers,' and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

'The beautiful is vanished, and returns not.'

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced. I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

There is hardly anything that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time.

ON GOING A JOURNEY

The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the horizon that shuts it from our sight, also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild barren country I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. 'Beyond Hyde Park,' says Sir Toppling Flutter, 'all is a desert.' All that part of the map that we do not see before us is a blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population known by the name of China to us? An inch of pasteboard on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our being only piece-meal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived, and

WILLIAM HAZLITT

with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!—To return to the question I have quitted above:

I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. ‘The mind is its own place’; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—shewed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

‘With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn’d—’

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from

ON GOING A JOURNEY

home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by one's-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support.—Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over 'the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France,' erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else; but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must 'jump' all our present comforts and connexions. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful, and in one sense instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,

‘ Out of my country and myself I go.’

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them; but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

THE LETTER-BELL

COMPLAINTS are frequently made of the vanity and shortness of human life, when, if we examine its smallest details, they present a world by themselves. The most trifling objects, retraced with the eye of memory, assume the vividness, the delicacy, and importance of insects seen through a magnifying glass. There is no end of the brilliancy or the variety. The habitual feeling of the love of life may be compared to 'one entire and perfect chrysolite,' which, if analysed, breaks into a thousand shining fragments. Ask the sum-total of the value of human life, and we are puzzled with the length of the account, and the multiplicity of items in it: take any one of them apart, and it is wonderful what matter for reflection will be found in it! As I write this, the *Letter-Bell* passes; it has a lively, pleasant sound with it, and not only fills the street with its importunate clamour, but rings clear through the length of many half-forgotten years. It strikes upon the ear, it vibrates to the brain, it wakes me from the dream of time, it flings me back upon my first entrance into life, the period of my first coming up to town, when all around was strange, uncertain, adverse—a hubbub of confused noises, a chaos of shifting objects—and when this sound alone, startling me with the recollection of a letter I had to send to the friends I had lately left, brought me as it were to myself, made me feel that I had links still connecting me with the universe, and gave me hope and patience to persevere. At that loud-tinkling, interrupted sound, the long line of blue hills near the place where I was brought up waves in the horizon, a golden sunset hovers over them, the dwarf-oaks rustle their red leaves in the evening breeze, and the road from Wem to Shrewsbury, by which I first set out on my journey through life, stares me in the face as plain, but, from time and

WILLIAM HAZLITT

change, not less visionary and mysterious than the pictures in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Or if the Letter-Bell does not lead me a dance into the country, it fixes me in the thick of my town recollections, I know not how long ago. It was a kind of alarm to break off from my work when there happened to be company to dinner or when I was going to the play. *That* was going to the play, indeed, when I went twice a year, and had not been more than half a dozen times in my life. Even the idea that any one else in the house was going was a sort of reflected enjoyment, and conjured up a lively anticipation of the scene. I remember a Miss D——, a maiden lady from Wales (who in her youth was to have been married to an earl), tantalized me greatly in this way, by talking all day of going to see Mrs. Siddons' 'airs and graces' at night in some favourite part; and when the Letter-Bell announced that the time was approaching, and its last receding sound lingered on the ear, or was lost in silence, how anxious and uneasy I became, lest she and her companion should not be in time to get good places—lest the curtain should draw up before they arrived—and lest I should lose one line or look in the intelligent report which I should hear the next morning! The punctuating of time at that early period—everything that gives it an articulate voice—seems of the utmost consequence; for we do not know what scenes in the *ideal* world may run out of them: a world of interest may hang upon every instant, and we can hardly sustain the weight of future years which are contained in embryo in the most minute and inconsiderable passing events. How often have I put off writing a letter till it was too late! How often have I had to run after the postman with it—now missing, now recovering the sound of his bell—breathless, angry with myself—then hearing the welcome sound come full round a corner—and seeing the scarlet costume which set all my fears and self-reproaches at rest! I do not recollect having ever repented giving a letter to the postman or wishing to

THE LETTER-BELL

retrieve it after he had once deposited it in his bag. What I have once set my hand to, I take the consequences of, and have been always pretty much of the same humour in this respect. I am not like the person who, having sent off a letter to his mistress, who resided a hundred and twenty miles in the country, and disapproving on second thoughts, of some expressions contained in it, took a post-chaise and four to follow and intercept it the next morning. At other times, I have sat and watched the decaying embers in a little back painting-room (just as the wintry day declined), and brooded over the half-finished copy of a Rembrandt, or a landscape by Vangoyen, placing it where it might catch a dim gleam of light from the fire; while the Letter-Bell was the only sound that drew my thoughts to the world without, and reminded me that I had a task to perform in it. As to that landscape, methinks I see it now—

‘The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail.’

There was a windmill, too, with a poor low clay-built cottage beside it: how delighted I was when I had made the tremulous, undulating reflection in the water, and saw the dull canvas become a lucid mirror of the commonest features of nature! Certainly, painting gives one a strong interest in nature and humanity (it is not the *dandy-school* of morals or sentiment)—

‘While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.’

Perhaps there is no part of a painter’s life (if we must tell ‘the secrets of the prison-house’) in which he has more enjoyment of himself and his art, than that in which, after his work is over, and with furtive, sidelong glances at what he has done, he is employed in washing his brushes and cleaning his pallet for the day. Afterwards, when he gets a servant in livery to do this for him, he may have other and more ostensible sources of satisfaction—greater splendour, wealth, or fame; but he

WILLIAM HAZLITT

will not be so wholly in his art, nor will his art have such a hold on him as when he was too poor to transfer its meanest drudgery to others—too humble to despise aught that had to do with the object of his glory and his pride, with that on which all his projects of ambition or pleasure were founded. When the professor is above this mechanical part of his business, it may have become a *stalking-horse* to other worldly schemes, but is no longer his *hobby-horse* and the delight of his inmost thoughts.

I used sometimes to hurry through this part of my occupation, while the Letter-Bell (which was my dinner-bell) summoned me to the fraternal board, where youth and hope

‘Made good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both;’

or oftener I put it off till after dinner, that I might loiter longer and with more luxurious indolence over it, and connect it with the thoughts of my next day’s labours.

The dustman’s-bell, with its heavy monotonous noise, and the brisk, lively tinkle of the muffin-bell, have something in them, but not much. They will bear dilating upon with the utmost licence of inventive prose. All things are not alike *conductors* to the imagination. A learned Scotch professor found fault with an ingenious friend and arch-critic for cultivating a rookery on his grounds: the professor declared ‘he would as soon think of encouraging a *froggery*.’ This was barbarous as it was senseless. Strange, that a country that has produced the *Scotch Novels* and *Gertrude of Wyoming* should want sentiment!

The postman’s double-knock at the door the next morning is ‘more german to the matter.’ How that knock often goes to the heart! We distinguish to a nicety the arrival of the Twopenny or the General Post. The summons of the latter is louder and heavier, as bringing news from a greater distance, and as, the longer it has been delayed, fraught with a deeper interest. We catch the sound of what is to be paid—eight-pence, nine-pence,

THE LETTER-BELL

a shilling—and our hopes generally rise with the postage. How we are provoked at the delay in getting change—at the servant who does not hear the door! Then if the postman passes, and we do not hear the expected knock, what a pang is there! It is like the silence of death—of hope! We think he does it on purpose, and enjoys all the misery of our suspense. I have sometimes walked out to see the Mail-Coach pass, by which I had sent a letter, or to meet it when I expected one. I never see a Mail-Coach, for this reason, but I look at it as the bearer of glad tidings—the messenger of fate. I have reason to say so. The finest sight in the metropolis is that of the Mail-Coaches setting off from Piccadilly. The horses paw the ground, and are impatient to be gone, as if conscious of the precious burden they convey. There is a peculiar secrecy and despatch, significant and full of meaning, in all the proceedings concerning them. Even the outside passengers have an erect and supercilious air, as if proof against the accidents of the journey. In fact, it seems indifferent whether they are to encounter the summer's heat or winter's cold, since they are borne on through the air in a winged chariot. The Mail-Carts drive up; the transfer of packages is made; and, at a signal given, they start off, bearing the irrevocable scrolls that give wings to thought, and that bind or sever hearts for ever. How we hate the Putney and Brentford stages that draw up in a line after they are gone! Some persons think the sublimest object in nature is a ship launched on the bosom of the ocean; but give me, for my private satisfaction, the Mail-Coaches that pour down Piccadilly of an evening, tear up the pavement, and devour the way before them to the Land's-End!

In Cowper's time, Mail-Coaches were hardly set up; but he has beautifully described the coming-in of the Post-Boy:—

'Hark! 'tis the twanging horn! O'er yonder bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length

WILLIAM HAZLITT

Bestrides the wintry flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright,
He comes, the herald of a noisy world,
With spattered boots, strapped waist, and frozen
locks;
News from all nations lumbering at his back.
True to his charge, the close-packed load behind,
Yet careless what he brings, his one concern
Is to conduct it to the destined inn;
And having dropped the expected bag, pass on.
He whistles as he goes, light-hearted wretch!
Cold and yet cheerful; messenger of grief
Perhaps to thousands, and of joy to some;
To him indifferent whether grief or joy.
Houses in ashes and the fall of stocks,
Births, deaths, and marriages, epistles wet
With tears that trickled down the writer's cheeks
Fast as the periods from his fluent quill,
Or charged with amorous sighs of absent swains
Or nymphs responsive, equally affect
His horse and him, unconscious of them all.'

And yet, notwithstanding this, and so many other passages that seem like the very marrow of our being, Lord Byron denies that Cowper was a poet!—The Mail-Coach is an improvement on the Post-Boy; but I fear it will hardly bear so poetical a description. The picturesque and dramatic do not keep pace with the useful and mechanical. The telegraphs that lately communicated the intelligence of the new revolution to all France within a few hours are a wonderful contrivance; but they are less striking and appalling than the beacon-fires (mentioned by Æschylus), which, lighted from hill-top to hill-top, announced the taking of Troy, and the return of Agamemnon.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

MACBETH

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

MACBETH and *Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, are usually reckoned Shakespeare's four principal tragedies. *Lear* stands first for the profound intensity of the passion; *Macbeth* for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action; *Othello* for the progressive interest and powerful alternations of feeling; *Hamlet* for the refined development of thought and sentiment. If the force of genius shown in each of these works is astonishing, their variety is not less so. They are like different creations of the same mind, not one of which has the slightest reference to the rest. This distinctness and originality is indeed the necessary consequence of truth and nature. Shakespeare's genius alone appeared to possess the resources of nature. He is 'your only tragedy-maker.' His plays have the force of things upon the mind. What he represents is brought home to the bosom as a part of our experience, implanted in the memory as if we had known the places, persons, and things of which he treats. *Macbeth* is like a record of a preternatural and tragical event. It has the rugged severity of an old chronicle with all that the imagination of the poet can engraft upon traditional belief. The castle of Macbeth, round which 'the air smells wooingly,' and where 'the temple-haunting martlet builds,' has a real subsistence in the mind; the Weird Sisters meet us in person on 'the blasted heath'; the 'air-drawn dagger' moves slowly before our eyes; the 'gracious Duncan,' the 'blood-boulted Banquo' stand before us; all that passed through the mind of Macbeth passes,

WILLIAM HAZLITT

without the loss of a tittle, through ours. All that could actually take place, and all that is only possible to be conceived, what was said and what was done, the workings of passion, the spells of magic, are brought before us with the same absolute truth and vividness.—Shakespeare excelled in the openings of his plays: that of *Macbeth* is the most striking of any. The wildness of the scenery, the sudden shifting of the situations and characters, the bustle, the expectations excited, are equally extraordinary. From the first entrance of the Witches and the description of them when they meet Macbeth,

—What are these
So wither'd and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants of th' earth
And yet are on't?

the mind is prepared for all that follows.

This tragedy is alike distinguished for the lofty imagination it displays, and for the tumultuous vehemence of the action; and the one is made the moving principle of the other. The overwhelming pressure of preternatural agency urges on the tide of human passion with redoubled force. Macbeth himself appears driven along by the violence of his fate like a vessel drifting before a storm: he reels to and fro like a drunken man; he staggers under the weight of his own purposes and the suggestions of others; he stands at bay with his situation; and from the superstitious awe and breathless suspense into which the communications of the Weird Sisters throw him, is hurried on with daring impatience to verify their predictions, and with impious and bloody hand to tear aside the veil which hides the uncertainty of the future. He is not equal to the struggle with fate and conscience. He now 'bends up each corporal instrument to the terrible feat'; at other times his heart misgives him, and he is cowed and abashed by his success. 'The deed, no less than the attempt, confounds him.' His mind is assailed by the stings of remorse,

MACBETH

and full of 'preternatural solicitings.' His speeches and soliloquies are dark riddles on human life, baffling solution, and entangling him in their labyrinths. In thought he is absent and perplexed, sudden and desperate in act, from a distrust of his own resolution. His energy springs from the anxiety and agitation of his mind. His blindly rushing forward on the objects of his ambition and revenge, or his recoiling from them, equally betrays the harassed state of his feelings.—This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought in connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness gave her the ascendancy over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of all their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections. The impression which her lofty determination of character makes on the mind of Macbeth is well described where he exclaims:

—Bring forth men children only;
For thy undaunted mettle should compose
Nothing but males!

Nor do the pains she is at to 'screw his courage to the sticking-place,' the reproach to him, not to be 'lost so poorly in himself,' the assurance that 'a little water clears them of this deed,' show anything but her greater consistency in depravity. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to 'the sides of his intent'; and

WILLIAM HAZLITT

she is herself wound up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. The deliberate sacrifice of all other considerations to the gaining 'for their future days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom,' by the murder of Duncan, is gorgeously expressed in her invocation on hearing of 'his fatal entrance under her battlements':

—Come all you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:
And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full
Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,
Stop up the access and passage to remorse,
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
The effect and it. Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief. Come, thick night!
And pall thee in the dunkest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, hold, hold!—

When she first hears that 'Duncan comes there to sleep' she is so overcome by the news, which is beyond her utmost expectations, that she answers the messenger, 'Thou'rt mad to say it': and on receiving her husband's account of the predictions of the Witches, conscious of his instability of purpose, and that her presence is necessary to goad him on to the consummation of his promised greatness, she exclaims:

—Hie thee hither,
That I may pour my spirits in thine ear,
And chastise with the valour of my tongue
All that impedes thee from the golden round
Which fate and metaphysical aid doth seem
To have thee crowned withal.

This swelling exultation and keen spirit of triumph, this uncontrollable eagerness of anticipation, which seems to dilate her form and take possession of all her faculties,

MACBETH

this solid, substantial flesh and blood display of passion, exhibit a striking contrast to the cold, abstracted, gratuitous, servile malignity of the Witches, who are equally instrumental in urging Macbeth to his fate for the mere love of mischief, and from a disinterested delight in deformity and cruelty. They are hags of mischief, obscene panders to iniquity, malicious from their impotence of enjoyment, enamoured of destruction, because they are themselves unreal, abortive, half-existences—who become sublime from their exemption from all human sympathies and contempt for all human affairs, as Lady Macbeth does by the force of passion! Her fault seems to have been an excess of that strong principle of self-interest and family aggrandisement, not amenable to the common feelings of compassion and justice, which is so marked a feature in barbarous nations and times. A passing reflection of this kind, on the resemblance of the sleeping king to her father, alone prevents her from slaying Duncan with her own hand.

In speaking of the character of Lady Macbeth, we ought not to pass over Mrs. Siddons's manner of acting that part. We can conceive of nothing grander. It was something above nature. It seemed almost as if a being of a superior order had dropped from a higher sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine; she was tragedy personified. In coming on in the sleeping-scene, her eyes were open, but their sense was shut. She was like a person bewildered and unconscious of what she did. Her lips moved involuntarily—all her gestures were involuntary and mechanical. She glided on and off the stage like an apparition. To have seen her in that character was an event in everyone's life not to be forgotten.

The dramatic beauty of the character of Duncan, which excites the respect and pity even of his murderers, has been often pointed out. It forms a picture of itself. An instance of the author's power of giving a striking

WILLIAM HAZLITT

effect to a common reflection, by the manner of introducing it, occurs in a speech of Duncan, complaining of his having been deceived in his opinion of the Thane of Cawdor, at the very moment that he is expressing the most unbounded confidence in the loyalty and services of Macbeth:

There is no art
To find the mind's construction in the face:
He was a gentleman, on whom I built
An absolute trust.
O worthiest cousin, (*addressing himself to Macbeth*)
The sin of my Ingratitude e'en now
Was great upon me, etc.

Another passage to show that Shakespeare lost sight of nothing that could in any way give relief or heightening to his subject, is the conversation which takes place between Banquo and Fleance immediately before the murder-scene of Duncan.

Banquo. How goes the night, boy?

Fleance. The moon is down: I have not heard the clock.

Banquo. And she goes down at twelve.

Fleance. I take 't, 'tis later, Sir.

Banquo. Hold, take my sword. There's husbandry in heav'n,
Their candles are all out—
A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,
And yet I would not sleep: Merciful Powers,
Restrain in me the cursed thoughts that nature
Gives way to in repose.

In like manner, a fine idea is given of the gloomy coming on of evening, just as Banquo is going to be assassinated.

Light thickens and the crow
Makes wing to the rooky wood.

Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn.

Macbeth (generally speaking) is done upon a stronger and more systematic principle of contrast than any other of Shakespeare's plays. It moves upon the verge of an abyss, and is a constant struggle between life and

MACBETH

death. The action is desperate and the reaction is dreadful. It is a huddling together of fierce extremes, a war of opposite natures which of them shall destroy the other. There is nothing but what has a violent end or violent beginnings. The lights and shades are laid on with a determined hand; the transitions from triumph to despair, from the height of terror to the repose of death, are sudden and startling; every passion brings in its fellow-contrary, and the thoughts pitch and jostle against each other as in the dark. The whole play is an unruly chaos of strange and forbidden things, where the ground rocks under our feet. Shakespeare's genius here took its full swing, and trod upon the farthest bounds of nature and passion. This circumstance will account for the abruptness and violent antitheses of the style, the throes and labour which run through the expression, and from defects will turn them into beauties. 'So fair and foul a day I have not seen,' etc. 'Such welcome and unwelcome news together.' 'Men's lives are like the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken.' 'Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it.' The scene before the castle-gate follows the appearance of the Witches on the heath, and is followed by a midnight murder. Duncan is cut off betimes by treason leagued with witchcraft, and Macduff is taken untimely from his mother's womb to avenge his death. Macbeth, after the death of Banquo, wishes for his presence in extravagant terms, 'To him and all we thirst,' and when his ghost appears, cries out, 'Avaunt and quit my sight,' and being gone, he is 'himself again.' Macbeth resolves to get rid of Macduff, that 'he may sleep in spite of thunder'; and cheers his wife on the doubtful intelligence of Banquo's taking-off with the encouragement—'Then be thou jocund; ere the bat has flown his cloistered flight; ere to black Hecate's summons the shard-born beetle has rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done—a deed of dreadful note.' In Lady Macbeth's speech, "Had he not resembled my father as he

WILLIAM HAZLITT

slept, I had done 't,' there is murder and filial piety together; and in urging him to fulfil his vengeance against the defenceless king, her thoughts spare the blood neither of infants nor old age. The description of the Witches is full of the same contradictory principle; they 'rejoice when good kings bleed,' they are neither of the earth nor the air, but both; they 'should be women but their beards forbid it'; they take all the pains possible to lead Macbeth on to the height of his ambition, only to betray him 'in deeper consequence,' and after showing him all the pomp of their art, discover their malignant delight in his disappointed hopes, by that bitter taunt, 'Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?' We might multiply such instances everywhere.

The leading features in the character of Macbeth are striking enough, and they form what may be thought, at first, only a bold, rude, Gothic outline. By comparing it with other characters of the same author we shall perceive the absolute truth and identity which is observed in the midst of the giddy whirl and rapid career of events. Macbeth in Shakespeare no more loses his identity of character in the fluctuations of fortune or the storm of passion, than Macbeth in himself would have lost the identity of his person. Thus he is as distinct a being from Richard III as it is possible to imagine, though these two characters in common hands, and indeed in the hands of any other poet, would have been a repetition of the same general idea, more or less exaggerated. For both are tyrants, usurpers, murderers, both aspiring and ambitious, both courageous, cruel, treacherous. But Richard is cruel from nature and constitution. Macbeth becomes so from accidental circumstances. Richard is from his birth deformed in body and mind, and naturally incapable of good. Macbeth is full of 'the milk of human kindness,' is frank, sociable, generous. He is tempted to the commission of guilt by golden opportunities, by the instigations of his wife, and by prophetic warnings. Fate and metaphysical aid

MACBETH

conspire against his virtue and his loyalty. Richard on the contrary needs no prompter, but wades through a series of crimes to the height of his ambition from the ungovernable violence of his temper and a reckless love of mischief. He is never gay but in the prospect or in the success of his villainies: Macbeth is full of horror at the thoughts of the murder of Duncan, which he is with difficulty prevailed on to commit, and of remorse after its perpetration. Richard has no mixture of common humanity in his composition, no regard to kindred or posterity, he owns no fellowship with others, he is 'himself alone.' Macbeth is not destitute of feelings of sympathy, is accessible to pity, is even made in some measure the dupe of his uxoriousness, ranks the loss of friends, of the cordial love of his followers, and of his good name, among the causes which have made him weary of life, and regrets that he has ever seized the crown by unjust means, since he cannot transmit it to his posterity—

For Banquo's issue have I fil'd my mind—
For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd,
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings.

In the agitation of his mind, he envies those whom he has sent to peace. 'Duncan is in his grave; after life's fitful fever he sleeps well.'—It is true he becomes more callous as he plunges deeper in guilt; 'direness is thus rendered familiar to his slaughterous thoughts,' and he in the end anticipates his wife in the boldness and bloodiness of his enterprises, while she for want of the same stimulus of action, 'is troubled with thick-coming fancies that rob her of her rest,' goes mad and dies. Macbeth endeavours to escape from reflection on his crimes by repelling their consequences, and banishes remorse for the past by the meditation of future mischief. This is not the principle of Richard's cruelty, which displays the wanton malice of a fiend as much as the frailty of human passion. Macbeth is goaded on to acts of violence and retaliation by necessity; to Richard,

WILLIAM HAZLITT

blood is a pastime.—There are other decisive differences inherent in the two characters. Richard may be regarded as a man of the world, a plotting, hardened knave, wholly regardless of everything but his own ends, and the means to secure them.—Not so Macbeth. The superstitions of the age, the rude state of society, the local scenery and customs, all give a wildness and imaginary grandeur to his character. From the strangeness of the events that surround him, he is full of amazement and fear; and stands in doubt between the world of reality and the world of fancy. He sees sights not shown to mortal eye, and hears unearthly music. All is tumult and disorder within and without his mind; his purposes recoil upon himself, are broken and disjointed; he is the double thrall of his passions and his evil destiny. Richard is not a character either of imagination or pathos, but of pure self-will. There is no conflict of opposite feelings in his breast. The apparitions which he sees only haunt him in his sleep; nor does he live like Macbeth in a waking dream. Macbeth has considerable energy and manliness of character; but then he is ‘subject to all the skyey influences.’ He is sure of nothing but the present moment. Richard in the busy turbulence of his projects never loses his self-possession, and makes use of every circumstance that happens as an instrument of his long-reaching designs. In his last extremity we can only regard him as a wild beast taken in the toils: while we never entirely lose our concern for Macbeth; and he calls back all our sympathy by that fine close of thoughtful melancholy—

My way of life is fallen into the sear,
The yellow leaf; and that which should accompany old age,
As honour, troops of friends, I must not look to have;
But in their stead, curses not loud but deep,
Mouth-honour, breath, which the poor heart
Would fain deny, and dare not.

We can conceive a common actor to play Richard tolerably well; we can conceive no one to play Macbeth

MACBETH

properly, or to look like a man that had encountered the Weird Sisters. All the actors that we have ever seen appear as if they had encountered them on the boards of Covent Garden or Drury Lane, but not on the heath at Forres, and as if they did not believe what they had seen. The Witches of *Macbeth*, indeed, are ridiculous on the modern stage, and we doubt if the Furies of Æschylus would be more respected. The progress of manners and knowledge has an influence on the stage, and will in time perhaps destroy both tragedy and comedy. Filch's picking pockets in the *Beggar's Opera* is not so good a jest as it used to be: by the force of the police and of philosophy, Lillo's murders¹ and the ghosts in Shakespeare will become obsolete. At last, there will be nothing left, good nor bad, to be desired or dreaded, on the theatre or in real life.—A question has been started with respect to the originality of Shakespeare's Witches, which has been well answered by Mr. Lamb in his notes to the *Specimens of Early Dramatic Poetry*:

Though some resemblance may be traced between the charms in *Macbeth*, and the incantations in this play (*The Witch of Middleton*), which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakespeare. His Witches are distinguished from the Witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman plotting some dire mischief might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet with Macbeth's he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These Witches can hurt the body; those have power over the soul.—Hecate in Middleton has a son, a low buffoon; the hags of Shakespeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them.—Except Hecate, they have no names, which heightens their mysteriousness. The names; and some of the properties which Middleton has given to

¹ *Lillo's Murders*. In the *Fatal Curiosity* and *George Barnwell* by George Lillo (1693-1739).

WILLIAM HAZLITT

his hags, excite smiles. The Weird Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But, in a lesser degree, the Witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They raise jars, jealousies, strifes, *like a thick scurf o'er life.*

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

MANKIND, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M. was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Chofang, literally the Cook's holiday. The manuscript goes on to say, that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as youngers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labour of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odour assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experi-

CHARLES LAMB

enced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and, surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hail-stones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure, which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

'You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?'

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

‘O father, the pig, the pig, do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats.’

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out, ‘Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste,—O Lord,’—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers, as it had done his son’s, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavour, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious) both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbours would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti’s cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Peking, then an inconsiderable assize town.

CHARLES LAMB

Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it, and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and, when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts, make their way among mankind.—

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

(especially in these days) could be assigned in favour of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*, I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.

I speak not of your grown porkers—things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*, the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble, and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *præludium*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna,—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him, while he is 'doing'—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth, than a scorching heat, that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to

CHARLES LAMB

the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
Death came with timely care—

His memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapers. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite, than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwined, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbours' fare.

I am one of those, who freely and ungrudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. 'Presents,' I often say, 'endear Absents.' Hares,

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those 'tame villatic fowl'), capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, 'give everything.' I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavours, to extradomiciliate, or send out of the house, slightly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat, or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt at this time of day that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, schoolboy-like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present—and the odour of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that

CHARLES LAMB

I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness, and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old grey impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto—.

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's, and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, 'Whether, supposing that the flavour of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) super-added a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?' I forget the decision.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

CHARLES LAMB.

OLD CHINA

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture-gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play and the first exhibition that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have? to those little lawless, azure-tintured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics) yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue, which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, has made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

CHARLES LAMB

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to over-shade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

‘I wish the good old times would come again,’ she said, ‘when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state;’—so she was pleased to ramble on,—‘in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!) we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

‘Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so threadbare, and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker’s in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o’clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller

OLD CHINA

with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

‘When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Leonardo, which we christened the ‘Lady Blanche’; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi’s, and buy a wilderness of Leonardos. Yet do you?’

‘Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter’s Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holiday—holidays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day’s fare of savoury cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether

CHARLES LAMB

she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savourily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now, when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

'You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham*, and the *Surrender of Calais*, and Bannister and Mrs. Bland in the *Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden, or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? You used to say, that the gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in

OLD CHINA

more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient stair-cases, was bad enough,—but there was still a law of civility to women recognized to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play afterwards! Now we can only pay our money, and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

‘There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can we have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is the very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologizes, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

‘I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort

CHARLES LAMB

or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with ‘lusty brimmers’ (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the ‘coming guest.’ Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us.’

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of poor—hundred pounds a year. ‘It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth; a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride where we formerly walked: live better and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—

OLD CHINA

be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Croesus had, or the great Jew R—— is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house.’

CHARLES LAMB.

BARBARA S——

ON the noon of the 14th of November, 1743 or 4, I forget which it was, just as the clock had struck one, Barbara S——, with her accustomed punctuality, ascended the long rambling staircase, with awkward interposed landing-places, which led to the office, or rather a sort of box with a desk in it, whereat sat the then Treasurer of (what few of our readers may remember) the old Bath Theatre. All over the island it was the custom, and remains so I believe to this day, for the players to receive their weekly stipend on the Saturday. It was not much that Barbara had to claim.

This little maid had just entered her eleventh year; but her important station at the theatre, as it seemed to her, with the benefits which she felt to accrue from her pious application of her small earnings, had given an air of womanhood to her steps and to her behaviour. You would have taken her to have been at least five years older.

Till latterly she had merely been employed in choruses, or where children were wanted to fill up the scene. But the manager, observing a diligence and adroitness in her above her age, had for some few months past entrusted to her the performance of whole parts. You may guess the self-consequence of the promoted Barbara. She had already drawn tears in young Arthur; had rallied Richard with infantine petulance in the Duke of York; and in her turn had rebuked that petulance when she was Prince of Wales. She would have done the elder child in Morton's pathetic after-piece to the life; but as yet the *Children in the Wood* was not.

Long after this little girl was grown an aged woman, I have seen some of these small parts, each making two or three pages at most, copied out in the rudest hand of the then prompter, who doubtless transcribed a little more

carefully and fairly for the grown-up tragedy ladies of the establishment. But such as they were, blotted and scrawled, as for a child's use, she kept them all; and in the zenith of her after-reputation it was a delightful sight to behold them bound up in costliest Morocco, each single—each small part making a *book*—with fine clasps, gilt splashed, &c. She had conscientiously kept them as they had been delivered to her; not a blot had been effaced or tampered with. They were precious to her for their affecting remembrancings. They were her principia, her rudiments; the elementary atoms; the little steps by which she pressed forward to perfection. 'What,' she would say, 'could india-rubber, or a pumice stone, have done for these darlings?'

I am in no hurry to begin my story—indeed I have little or none to tell—so I will just mention an observation of hers connected with that interesting time.

Not long before she died, I had been discoursing with her on the quantity of real present emotion which a great tragic performer experiences during acting. I ventured to think, that though in the first instance such players must have possessed the feelings which they so powerfully called up in others, yet by frequent repetition those feelings must become deadened in great measure, and the performer trust to the memory of past emotion, rather than express a present one. She indignantly repelled the notion, that with a truly great tragedian the operation, by which such effects were produced upon an audience, could ever degrade itself into what was purely mechanical. With much delicacy, avoiding to instance in her *self* experience, she told me, that so long ago as when she used to play the part of the Little Son to Mrs. Porter's Isabella (I think it was), when that impressive actress has been bending over her in some heart-rending colloquy, she has felt real hot tears come trickling from her, which (to use her powerful expression) have perfectly scalded her back.

I am not quite so sure that it was Mrs. Porter; but it

CHARLES LAMB

was some great actress of that day. The name is indifferent; but the fact of the scalding tears I most distinctly remember.

I was always fond of the society of players, and am not sure that an impediment in my speech (which certainly kept me out of the pulpit) even more than certain personal disqualifications, which are often got over in that profession, did not prevent me at one time of life from adopting it. I have had the honour (I must ever call it) once to have been admitted to the tea-table of Miss Kelly. I have played at serious whist with Mr. Liston. I have chatted with ever good-humoured Mrs. Charles Kemble. I have conversed as friend to friend with her accomplished husband. I have been indulged with a classical conference with Macready; and with a sight of the Player-picture gallery at Mr. Matthews's, when the kind owner, to remunerate me for my love of the old actors (whom he loves so much), went over it with me, supplying to his capital collection what alone the artist could not give them—voice; and their living motion. Old tones, half-faded, of Dodd and Parsons and Baddeley, have lived again for me at his bidding. Only Edwin he could not restore to me. I have supped with —; but I am growing a coxcomb.

As I was about to say—at the desk of the then treasurer of the old Bath Theatre—not Diamond's—presented herself the little Barbara S—.

The parents of Barbara had been in reputable circumstances. The father had practised, I believe, as an apothecary in the town. But his practice from causes which I feel my own infirmity too sensibly that way to arraign—or perhaps from that pure infelicity which accompanies some people in their walk through life, and which it is impossible to lay at the door of imprudence—was now reduced to nothing. They were in fact in the very teeth of starvation, when the manager, who knew and respected them in better days, took the little Barbara into his company.

BARBARA S—

At the period I commenced with, her slender earnings were the sole support of the family, including two younger sisters. I must throw a veil over some mortifying circumstances. Enough to say, that her Saturday's pittance was the only chance of a Sunday's (generally their only) meal of meat.

One thing I will only mention, that in some child's part, where in her theatrical character she was to sup off a roast fowl (O joy to Barbara!) some comic actor, who was for the night caterer for this dainty—in the misguided humour of his part, threw over the dish such a quantity of salt (O grief and pain of heart to Barbara!) that when he crammed a portion of it into her mouth, she was obliged sputteringly to reject it; and what with shame of her ill-acted part, and pain of real appetite at missing such a dainty, her little heart sobbed almost to breaking, till a flood of tears, which the well-fed spectators were totally unable to comprehend, mercifully relieved her.

This was the little starved, meritorious maid, who stood before old Ravenscroft, the treasurer, for her Saturday's payment.

Ravenscroft was a man, I have heard many old theatrical people besides herself say, of all men least calculated for a treasurer. He had no head for accounts, paid away at random, kept scarce any books, and summing up at the week's end, if he found himself a pound or so deficient, blest himself that it was no worse.

Now Barbara's weekly stipend was a bare half guinea.—By mistake he popped into her hand a—whole one.

Barbara tripped away.

She was entirely unconscious at first of the mistake: God knows, Ravenscroft would never have discovered it.

But when she had got down to the first of those uncouth landing-places, she became sensible of an unusual weight of metal pressing her little hand.

Now mark the dilemma.

She was by nature a good child. From her parents

CHARLES LAMB

and those about her she had imbibed no contrary influence. But then they had taught her nothing. Poor men's smoky cabins are not always porticoes of moral philosophy. This little maid had no instinct to evil, but then she might be said to have no fixed principle. She had heard honesty commended, but never dreamed of its application to herself. She thought of it as something which concerned grown-up people—men and women. She had never known temptation, or thought of preparing resistance against it.

Her first impulse was to go back to the old treasurer, and explain to him his blunder. He was already so confused with age, besides a natural want of punctuality, that she would have had some difficulty in making him understand it. She saw *that* in an instant. And then it was such a bit of money! and then the image of a larger allowance of butcher's meat on their table next day came across her, till her little eye glistened, and her mouth moistened. But then Mr. Ravenscroft had always been so good-natured, had stood her friend behind the scenes, and even recommended her promotion to some of her little parts. But again the old man was reputed to be worth a world of money. He was supposed to have fifty pounds a year clear of the theatre. And then came staring upon her the figures of her little stockingless and shoeless sisters. And when she looked at her own neat white cotton stockings, which her situation at the theatre had made it indispensable for her mother to provide for her, with hard straining and pinching from the family stock, and thought how glad she should be to cover their poor feet with the same—and how then they could accompany her to rehearsals, which they had hitherto been precluded from doing, by reason of their unfashionable attire,—in these thoughts she reached the second landing-place—the second, I mean from the top—for there was still another left to traverse.

Now virtue support Barbara!

BARBARA S—

And that never-failing friend did step in—for at that moment a strength not her own I have heard her say, was revealed to her—a reason above reasoning—and without her own agency, as it seemed (for she never felt her feet to move) she found herself transported back to the individual desk she had just quitted, and her hand in the old hand of Ravenscroft, who in silence took back the refunded treasure, and who had been sitting (good man) insensible to the lapse of minutes, which to her were anxious ages; and from that moment a deep peace fell upon her heart, and she knew the quality of honesty.

A year or two's unrepining application to her profession brightened up the feet and the prospects of her little sisters, set the whole family upon their legs again, and released her from the difficulty of discussing moral dogmas upon a landing-place.

I have heard her say, that it was a surprise, not much short of mortification to her, to see the coolness with which the old man pocketed the difference, which had caused her such mortal throes.

This anecdote of herself I had in the year 1800, from the mouth of the late Mrs. Crawford, then sixty-seven years of age (she died soon after); and to her struggles upon this childish occasion I have sometimes ventured to think her indebted for that power of rending the heart in the representation of conflicting emotions, for which in after-years she was considered as little inferior (if at all so in the part of Lady Randolph) even to Mrs. Siddons.

CHARLES LAMB.

CAPTAIN STARKEY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE EVERY-DAY BOOK

DEAR SIR,—I read your account of this unfortunate being, and his forlorn piece of self-history,¹ with that smile of half-interest which the *Annals of Insignificance* excite, till I came to where he says ‘I was bound apprentice to Mr. William Bird, an eminent writer, and Teacher of languages and Mathematics,’ &c.—when I started as one does in the recognition of an old acquaintance in a supposed stranger. This, then, was that Starkey of whom I have heard my sister relate so many pleasant anecdotes; and whom, never having seen, I yet seem almost to remember. For nearly fifty years she had lost all sight of him—and behold the gentle Usher of her youth grown into an aged Beggar, dubbed with an opprobrious title, to which he had no pretensions; an object and a May game! To what base purposes may we not return! What may not have been the meek creature’s sufferings—what his wanderings—before he finally settled down in the comparative comfort of an old Hospitaller of the Almonry of Newcastle! And is poor Starkey dead?—

I was a scholar of that ‘eminent writer’ that he speaks of; but Starkey had quitted the school about a year before I came to it. Still the odour of his merits had left a fragranciness upon the recollection of the elder pupils. The school-room stands where it did, looking into a discoloured dingy garden in the passage leading from Fetter Lane into Bartlett’s Buildings. It is still a School, though the main prop, alas! has fallen so ingloriously; and bears a Latin inscription over the entrance in the

¹ ‘Memoirs of the Life of Benjamin Starkey, late of London, but now an inmate of the Freeman’s Hospital in Newcastle. Written by himself. With a portrait of the author, and a facsimile of his handwriting. Printed and sold by William Hall, Great Market, Newcastle,’ 1818. 12mo, pp. 14.

CAPTAIN STARKEY

Lane, which was unknown in our humbler times. Heaven knows what 'languages' were taught in it then; I am sure that neither my Sister nor myself brought any out of it, but a little of our native English. By 'mathematics,' reader, must be understood 'ciphering.' It was in fact a humble day-school, at which reading and writing were taught to us boys in the morning, and the same slender erudition was communicated to the girls, our sisters, &c. in the evening. Now Starkey presided, under Bird, over both establishments. In my time, Mr. Cook, now or lately a respectable Singer and Performer at Drury-lane Theatre, and Nephew to Mr. Bird, had succeeded to him. I well remember Bird. He was a squat, corpulent, middle-sized man, with something of the gentleman about him, and that peculiar mild tone—especially while he was inflicting punishment—which is so much more terrible to children, than the angriest looks and gestures. Whippings were not frequent; but when they took place, the correction was performed in a private room adjoining, where we could only hear the complaints, but saw nothing. This heightened the decorum and the solemnity. But the ordinary chastisement was the bastinado, a stroke or two on the palm with that almost obsolete weapon now—the ferule. A ferule was a sort of flat ruler, widened at the inflicting end into a shape resembling a pear,—but nothing like so sweet—with a delectable hole in the middle, to raise blisters, like a cupping-glass. I have an intense recollection of that disused instrument of torture—and the malignancy, in proportion to the apparent mildness, with which its strokes were applied. The idea of a rod is accompanied with something ludicrous; but by no process can I look back upon this blister-raiser with any thing but unmingled horror.—To make him look more formidable—if a pedagogue had need of these heightenings—Bird wore one of those flowered Indian gowns, formerly in use with schoolmasters; the strange figures upon which we used to interpret into hieroglyphics of

CHARLES LAMB

pain and suffering. But boyish fears apart—Bird I believe was in the main a humane and judicious master.

O, how I remember our legs wedged in to those uncomfortable sloping desks, where we sat elbowing each other—and the injunctions to attain a free hand, unattainable in that position; the first copy I wrote after, with its moral lesson, ‘Art improves nature’; the still earlier pot-hooks and the hangers, some traces of which I fear may yet be apparent in this manuscript; the truant looks side-long to the garden, which seemed a mockery of our imprisonment; the prize for best spelling which had almost turned my head, and which to this day I cannot reflect upon without a vanity, which I ought to be ashamed of—our little leaden inkstands, not separately subsisting, but sunk into the desks; the bright, punctually-washed morning fingers, darkening gradually with another and another ink-spot. What a world of little associated circumstances, pains, and pleasures, mingling their quotas of pleasure, arise at the reading of those few simple words—‘Mr. William Bird, an eminent Writer and Teacher of languages and mathematics in Fetter Lane, Holborn!’

Poor Starkey, when young, had that peculiar stamp of old-fashionedness in his face, which makes it impossible for a beholder to predicate any particular age in the object. You can scarce make a guess between seventeen and seven and thirty. This antique cast always seems to promise ill-luck and penury. Yet it seems, he was not always the abject thing he came to. My Sister, who well remembers him, can hardly forgive Mr. Thomas Ranson for making an etching so unlike her idea of him, when he was a youthful teacher at Mr. Bird’s school. Old age and poverty—a life-long poverty she thinks, could at no time have so effaced the marks of native gentility, which were once so visible in a face, otherwise strikingly ugly, thin, and care-worn. From her recollections of him, she thinks that he would have wanted bread, before he would have begged or borrowed

CAPTAIN STARKEY

a half-penny. If any of the girls (she says) who were my school-fellows should be reading, through their aged spectacles, tidings from the dead of their youthful friend Starkey, they will feel a pang, as I do, at having teased his gentle spirit. They were big girls, it seems, too old to attend his instructions with the silence necessary; and however old age, and a long state of beggary, seem to have reduced his writing faculties to a state of imbecility, in those days, his language occasionally rose to the bold and figurative, for when he was in despair to stop their chattering, his ordinary phrase was, 'Ladies, if you will not hold your peace, not all the powers in heaven can make you.' Once he was missing for a day or two; he had run away. A little old unhappy-looking man brought him back—it was his father—and he did no business in the school that day, but sate moping in a corner, with his hands before his face; and the girls, his tormentors, in pity for his case, for the rest of that day forbore to annoy him. I had been there but a few months (adds she) when Starkey, who was the chief instructor of us girls, communicated to us a profound secret, that the tragedy of 'Cato' was shortly to be acted by the elder boys, and that we were to be invited to the representation. That Starkey lent a helping hand in fashioning the actors, she remembers; and but for his unfortunate person, he might have had some distinguished part in the scene to enact; as it was, he had the arduous task of prompter assigned to him, and his feeble voice was heard clear and distinct, repeating the text during the whole performance. She describes her recollection of the cast of characters even now with a relish. Martia, by the handsome Edgar Hickman, who afterwards went to Africa, and of whom she never afterwards heard tidings,—Lucia, by Master Walker, whose sister was her particular friend; Cato, by John Hunter, a masterly declaimer, but a plain boy, and shorter by the head than his two sons in the scene, &c. In conclusion, Starkey appears to have been one of those mild spirits,

CHARLES LAMB

which, not originally deficient in understanding, are crushed by penury into dejection and feebleness. He might have proved a useful adjunct, if not an ornament to Society, if Fortune had taken him into a very little fostering, but wanting that, he became a Captain—a by-word—and lived, and died, a broken bulrush.

CHARLES LAMB.

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

A GRECIAN philosopher being asked why he wept for the death of his son, since the sorrow was in vain, replied, 'I weep on that account.' And his answer became his wisdom. It is only for sophists to contend, that we, whose eyes contain the fountains of tears, need never give way to them. It would be unwise not to do so on some occasions. Sorrow unlocks them in her balmy moods. The first bursts may be bitter and overwhelming; but the soil on which they pour would be worse without them. They refresh the fever of the soul—the dry misery which parches the countenance into furrows, and renders us liable to our most terrible 'flesh-quakes.'

There are sorrows, it is true, so great, that to give them some of the ordinary vents is to run a hazard of being overthrown. These we must rather strengthen ourselves to resist, or bow quietly and drily down, in order to let them pass over us, as the traveller does the wind of the desert. But where we feel that tears would relieve us, it is false philosophy to deny ourselves at least that first refreshment; and it is always false consolation to tell people that, because they cannot help a thing, they are not to mind it. The true way is, to let them grapple with the unavoidable sorrow, and try to win it into gentleness by a reasonable yielding. There are griefs so gentle in their very nature, that it would be worse than false heroism to refuse them a tear. Of this kind are the deaths of infants. Particular circumstances may render it more or less advisable to indulge in grief for the loss of a little child; but, in general, parents should be no more advised to repress their first tears on such an occasion, than to repress their smiles towards a child surviving, or to indulge in any other sympathy. It is an appeal to the same gentle tenderness; and such appeals are never made in vain. The end of them is an

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

acquittal from the harsher bonds of affliction—from the tying down of the spirit to one melancholy idea.

It is the nature of tears of this kind, however strongly they may gush forth, to run into quiet waters at last. We cannot easily, for the whole course of our lives, think with pain of any good and kind person whom we have lost. It is the divine nature of their qualities to conquer pain and death itself; to turn the memory of them into pleasure; to survive with a placid aspect in our imaginations. We are writing at this moment just opposite a spot which contains the grave of one inexpressibly dear to us. We see from our window the trees about it, and the church spire. The green fields lie around. The clouds are travelling over-head, alternately taking away the sunshine and restoring it. The vernal winds, piping of the flowery summer-time, are nevertheless calling to mind the far-distant and dangerous ocean, which the heart that lies in that grave had many reasons to think of. And yet the sight of this spot does not give us pain. So far from it, it is the existence of that grave which doubles every charm of the spot; which links the pleasures of our childhood and manhood together; which puts a hushing tenderness in the winds, and a patient joy upon the landscape; which seems to unite heaven and earth, mortality and immortality, the grass of the tomb and the grass of the green field; and gives a more maternal aspect to the whole kindness of nature. It does not hinder gaiety itself. Happiness was what its tenant, through all her troubles, would have diffused. To diffuse happiness and to enjoy it, is not only carrying on her wishes, but realising her hopes; and gaiety, freed from its only pollutions, malignity and want of sympathy, is but a child playing about the knees of its mother.

The remembered innocence and endearments of a child stand us instead of virtues that have died older. Children have not exercised the voluntary offices of friendship; they have not chosen to be kind and good

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

to us; not stood by us, from conscious will, in the hour of adversity. But they have shared their pleasures and pains with us as well as they could; the interchange of good offices between us has, of necessity, been less mingled with the troubles of the world; the sorrow arising from their death is the only one which we can associate with their memories. These are happy thoughts that cannot die. Our loss may always render them pensive; but they will not always be painful. It is a part of the benignity of Nature that pain does not survive like pleasure, at any time, much less where the cause of it is an innocent one. The smile will remain reflected by memory, as the moon reflects the light upon us when the sun has gone into heaven.

When writers like ourselves quarrel with earthly pain (we mean writers of the same intentions, without implying, of course, anything about abilities or otherwise), they are misunderstood if they are supposed to quarrel with pains of every sort. This would be idle and effeminate. They do not pretend, indeed, that humanity might not wish, if it could, to be entirely free from pain; for it endeavours, at all times, to turn pain into pleasure: or at least to set off the one with the other, to make the former a zest and the latter a refreshment. The most unaffected dignity of suffering does this, and, if wise, acknowledges it. The greatest benevolence towards others, the most unselfish relish of their pleasures, even at its own expense, does but look to increasing the general stock of happiness, though content, if it could, to have its identity swallowed up in that splendid contemplation. We are far from meaning that this is to be called selfishness. We are far, indeed, from thinking so, or of so confounding words. But neither is it to be called pain when most unselfish, if disinterestedness be truly understood. The pain that is in it softens into pleasure, as the darker hue of the rainbow melts into the brighter. Yet even if a harsher line is to be drawn between the

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

pain and pleasure of the most unselfish mind (and ill-health, for instance, may draw it), we should not quarrel with it if it contributed to the general mass of comfort, and were of a nature which general kindness could not avoid. Made as we are, there are certain pains without which it would be difficult to conceive certain great and overbalancing pleasures. We may conceive it possible for beings to be made entirely happy; but in our composition something of pain seems to be a necessary ingredient, in order that the materials may turn to as fine account as possible, though our clay, in the course of ages and experience, may be refined more and more. We may get rid of the worst earth, though not of earth itself.

Now the liability to the loss of children—or rather what renders us sensible of it, the occasional loss itself—seems to be one of these necessary bitters thrown into the cup of humanity. We do not mean that every one must lose one of his children in order to enjoy the rest; or that every individual loss afflicts us in the same proportion. We allude to the deaths of infants in general. These might be as few as we could render them. But if none at all ever took place, we should regard every little child as a man or woman secured; and it will easily be conceived what a world of endearing cares and hopes this security would endanger. The very idea of infancy would lose its continuity with us. Girls and boys would be future men and women, not present children. They would have attained their full growth in our imaginations, and might as well have been men and women at once. On the other hand, those who have lost an infant, are never, as it were, without an infant child. They are the only persons who, in one sense, retain it always, and they furnish their neighbours with the same idea.¹ The other children grow up to

¹ 'I sighed,' says old Captain Dalton, 'when I envied you the two bonnie children; but I sigh not now to call either the monk or the soldier mine own!'—*Monastery*, vol. iii., p. 341.

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

manhood and womanhood, and suffer all the changes of mortality. This one alone is rendered an immortal child. Death has arrested it with his kindly harshness, and blessed it into an eternal image of youth and innocence.

Of such as these are the pleasantest shapes that visit our fancy and our hopes. ~~They are the ever-smiling emblems of joy; the prettiest pages that wait upon imagination.~~ Lastly 'Of these are the kingdom of heaven.' Wherever there is a province of that benevolent and all-accessible empire, whether on earth or elsewhere, such are the gentle spirits that must inhabit it. To such simplicity, or the resemblance of it, must they come. Such must be the ready confidence of their hearts, and creativeness of their fancy. And so ignorant must they be of the 'knowledge of good and evil,' losing their discernment of that self-created trouble, by enjoying the garden before them, and not being ashamed of what is kindly and innocent.

LEIGH HUNT.

OF STICKS

AMONG other comparative injuries which we are accustomed to do to the characters of things animate and inanimate, in order to gratify our human vanity, such as calling a rascal a dog (which is a great compliment), and saying that a tyrant makes a beast of himself (which it would be a very good thing, and a lift in the world, if he could), is a habit in which some persons indulge themselves, of calling insipid things and persons *sticks*. Such and such a one is said to write a stick; and such another is himself called a stick;—a poor stick, a mere stick, a stick of a fellow.

We protest against this injustice done to those useful and once flourishing sons of a good old stock. Take, for instance, a common cherry stick, which is one of the favourite sort. In the first place, it is a very pleasant substance to look at, the grain running round it in glossy and shadowy rings. Then it is of primæval antiquity, handed down from scion to scion through the most flourishing of genealogical trees. In the third place, it is of Eastern origin; of a stock which it is possible may have furnished Haroun Al Raschid with a djereed, or Mahomet with a camel-stick, or Xenophon in his famous retreat with fences, or Xerxes with tent-pins, or Alexander with a javelin, or Sardanapalus with tarts, or Solomon with a simile for his mistress' lips, or Jacob with a crook, or Methusalem with shadow, or Zoroaster with mathematical instruments, or the builders of Babel with scaffolding. Lastly, how do you know but that you may have eaten cherries off this very stick? for it was once alive with sap, and rustling with foliage, and powdered with blossoms, and red and laughing with fruit. Where the leathern tassel now hangs, may have dangled a bunch of berries; and instead of the brass ferule poking in the mud, the tip was growing into the air with its youngest green.

OF STICKS

The use of sticks in general is of the very greatest antiquity. It is impossible to conceive a state of society in which boughs should not be plucked from trees for some purpose of utility or amusement. Savages use clubs, hunters require lances, and shepherds their crooks. Then came the sceptre, which is originally nothing but a staff, or a lance, or a crook, distinguished from others. The Greek word for sceptre signifies also a walking-stick. A mace, however plumped up and disguised with gilding and a heavy crown, is only the same thing in the hands of an inferior ruler; and so are all other sticks used in office, from the baton of the Grand Constable of France down to the tipstaff of a constable in Bow-street. As the shepherd's dog is the origin of the gentlest whelp that lies on a hearth-cushion, and of the most pompous barker that jumps about a pair of greys, so the merest stick used by a modern Arcadian, when he is driving his flock to Leadenhall-market with a piece of candle in his hat, and No. 554 on his arm, is the first great parent and original of all authoritative staves, from the beadle's cane wherewith he terrifies charity-boys who eat bull's-eyes in churchtime, up to the silver mace of the verger, to the wands of parishes and governors,—the tasselled staff, wherewith the Band-Major so loftily picks out his measured way before the musicians, and which he holds up when they are to cease; to the White Staff of the Lord Treasurer; the court-officer emphatically called the Lord Gold Stick; the Bishop's Crosier (*Pedum Episcopale*), whereby he is supposed to pull back the feet of his straying flock; and the royal and imperial sceptre aforesaid, whose holders, formerly called Shepherds of the people (*Ποιμένες Λαῶν*), were seditiously said to fleece more than to protect. The Vaulting-Staff, a luxurious instrument of exercise, must have been used in times immemorial for passing streams and rough ground with. It is the ancestor of the staff with which Pilgrims travelled. The Staff and Quarter-Staff of the country Robin Hoods is a remnant of the

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

war-club. So is the Irish Shilelah. The originals of all these, that are not extant in our own country, may still be seen wherever there are nations uncivilized. The Negro Prince, who asked our countrymen what was said of him in Europe, was surrounded in state with a parcel of ragged fellows with shilelahs over their shoulders—Lord Old Sticks.

But sticks have been great favourites with civilized as well as uncivilized nations; only the former have used them more for help and ornament. The Greeks were a sceptropherous people. Homer probably used a walking-stick because he was blind; but we have it on authority that Socrates did. On his first meeting with Xenophon, which was in a narrow passage, he barred up the way with his stick, and asked him, in his good-natured manner, where provisions were to be had. Xenophon having told him, he asked again, if he knew where virtue and wisdom were to be had; and this reducing the young man to a nonplus, he said, 'Follow me, and learn'; which Xenophon did, and became the great man we have all heard of. The fatherly story of Agesilaus, who was caught amusing his little boy with riding on a stick, and asked his visitor whether he was a father, is too well-known for repetition.

There is an illustrious anecdote connected with our subject in Roman history. The highest compliment which his countrymen thought they could pay to the first Scipio, was to call him a walking-stick; for such is the signification of his name. It was given him for the filial zeal with which he used to help his old father about, serving his decrepit age instead of a staff. But the Romans were not remarkable for sentiment. What we hear in general of their sticks, is the thumpings which servants get in their plays; and above all, the famous rods which the lictors carried, and which being actual sticks, must have inflicted horrible dull bruises and malignant stripes. They were pretty

OF STICKS

things, it must be confessed, to carry before the chief magistrate! just as if the King or the Lord Chancellor were to be preceded by a cat-o'-nine-tails.

Sticks are not at all in such request with modern times as they were. Formerly, we suspect, most of the poorer ranks in England used to carry them, both on account of the prevalence of manly sports, and for security in travelling; for before the invention of posts and mail-coaches, a trip to Scotland or Northumberland was a thing to make a man write his will. As they came to be ornamented, fashion adopted them. The Cavaliers of Charles the First's time were a sticked race, as well as the apostolic divines and puritans, who appear to have carried staves, because they read of them among the patriarchs. Charles the First, when at his trial, held out his stick to forbid the Attorney-General's proceeding. There is an interesting little story connected with a stick, which is related of Andrew Marvell's father, (worthy of such a son,) and which, as it is little known, we will repeat; though it respects the man more than the machine. He had been visited by a young lady, who in spite of a stormy evening persisted in returning across the Humber, because her family would be alarmed at her absence. The old gentleman, high-hearted and cheerful, after vainly trying to dissuade her from perils which he understood better than she, resolved in his gallantry to bear her company. He accordingly walked with her down to the shore, and getting into the boat, threw his stick to a friend, with a request, in a lively tone of voice, that he would preserve it for a keepsake. He then cried out merrily 'Ho-hoy for heaven!' and put off with his visitor. They were drowned.

As commerce increased, exotic sticks grew in request from the Indies. Hence the Bamboo, the Whanghee, the Jambee which makes such a genteel figure under Mr. Lilly's auspices in the *Tatler*; and our light modern cane, which the Sunday stroller buys at sixpence the

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

piece, with a twist of it at the end for a handle. The physicians, till within the last few score of years, retained among other fopperies which they converted into gravities the wig and gold-headed cane. The latter had been an indispensable sign-royal of fashion, and was turned to infinite purposes of accomplished gesticulation. One of the most courtly personages in the *Rape of the Lock* is

Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.

Sir Richard Steele, as we have before noticed, is reproached by a busy-body of those times for a habit of jerking his stick against the pavement as he walked. When swords were abolished by Act of Parliament, the tavern-boys took to pinking each other, as injuriously as they could well manage, with their walking-sticks. Macklin the player was tried for his life for poking a man's eye out in this way. Perhaps this helped to bring the stick into disrepute; for the use of it seems to have declined more and more, till it is now confined to old men, and a few among the younger. It is unsuitable to our money-getting mode of rushing hither and thither. Instead of pinking a man's ribs or so, or thrusting out his eye from an excess of the jovial, we break his heart with a bankruptcy.

Canes became so common before the decline of the use of sticks, that whenever a man is beaten with a stick, let it be of what sort it may, it is still common to say that he has had a 'caning': which reminds us of an anecdote more agreeable than surprising; though the patient doubtless thought the reverse. A gentleman, who was remarkable for the amenity of his manners, accompanied by a something which a bully might think it safe to presume upon, found himself compelled to address a person who did not know how to 'translate his style,' in the following words, which were all delivered in the sweetest tone in the world, with an air of almost hushing gentility:—'Sir, I am extremely sorry—to be obliged to

OF STICKS

ay,—that you appear to have a very erroneous notion of the manners that become your situation in life;—and I am compelled with great reluctance, to add,' (here he became still softer and more delicate) 'that, if you do not think fit, upon reflection, to alter this very extraordinary conduct towards a gentleman, I shall be under the necessity of —— caning you.' The other treated the thing as a joke; and to the delight of the bystanders, received a very grave drubbing.

There are two eminent threats connected with caning, in the history of Dr. Johnson. One was from himself, when he was told that Foote intended to mimic him on the stage. He replied, that if 'the dog' ventured to play his tricks with him, he would step out of the stage-box, chastise him before the audience, and then throw himself upon their candour and common sympathy. Foote desisted, as he had good reason to do. The Doctor would have read him a stout lesson, and then made a speech to the audience as forcible; so that the theatrical annals have to regret, that the subject and Foote's shoulders were not afforded him to expatiate upon. It would have been a fine involuntary piece of acting,—the part of Scipio by Dr. Johnson.—The other threat was against the Doctor himself from Macpherson, the compounder of Ossian. It was for denying the authenticity of that work; a provocation the more annoying, inasmuch as he did not seem duly sensible of its merits. Johnson replied to Macpherson's letter by one of contemptuous brevity and pith; and contented himself with carrying about a large stick, with which he intended to repel Macpherson in case of an assault. Had they met, it would have been like 'two clouds over the Caspian'; for both were large-built men.

We recollect another bacular Johnsonian anecdote. When he was travelling in Scotland, he lost a huge stick of his in the little treeless island of Mull. Boswell told him he would recover it: but the Doctor shook his head. 'No, no,' said he; 'let anybody in Mull get possession

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

of it, and it will never be restored. Consider, Sir, the value of such a piece of timber here.'

The most venerable sticks now surviving are the smooth amber-coloured canes in the possession of old ladies. They have sometimes a gold head, but oftener a crook of ivory. But they have latterly been much displaced by light umbrellas, the handles of which are imitations of them; and these are gradually retreating before the young parasol, especially about town. The old ladies take the wings of the stage-coaches, and are run away with by John Pullen, in a style of infinite convenience. The other sticks in use are for the most part of cherry, oak, and crab, and seldom adorned with more than a leathern tassel: often with nothing. Bamboo and other canes do not abound, as might be expected from our intercourse with India; but commerce in this as in other respects has overshot its mark. People cannot afford to use sticks, any more than bees could in their hives. Of the common sabbatical cane we have already spoken. There is a sufficing little manual, equally light and lissom, yclept an ebony switch; but we have not seen it often.

That sticks, however, are not to be despised by the leisurely, any one who has known what it is to want words, or to slice off the head of a thistle, will allow. The utility of the stick seems divisible into three heads: first, to give a general consciousness of power; second, which may be called a part of the first, to help the demeanour; and third, which may be called a part of the second, to assist a man over the gaps of speech—the little awkward intervals, called want of ideas.

Deprive a man of his stick, who is accustomed to carry one, and with what a diminished sense of vigour and gracefulness he issues out of his house! Wanting his stick, he wants himself. His self-possession, like Acres's on the duel-ground, has gone out of his fingers' ends; but restore it him, and how he resumes his energy! If a common walking-stick, he cherishes the

OF STICKS

top of it with his fingers, putting them out and back again, with a fresh desire to feel it in his palm! How he strikes it against the ground, and feels power come back to his arm! How he makes the pavement ring with the ferule, if in a street; or decapitates the downy thistles aforesaid, if in a field! Then if it be a switch, how firmly he jerks his step at the first infliction of it on the air! How he quivers the point of it as he goes, holding the handle with a straight-dropped arm and a tight grasp! How his foot keeps time to the switches! How he twigs the luckless pieces of lilac or other shrubs, that peep out of a garden railing! And if a sneaking-looking dog is coming by, how he longs to exercise his despotism and his moral sense at once, by giving him an invigorating twinge!

But what would certain men of address do without their cane or switch? There is an undoubted Rhabdosophy, Sceptrosophy, or Wisdom of the Stick, besides the famous Divining Rod, with which people used to discover treasures and fountains. It supplies a man with inaudible remarks, and an inexpressible number of graces. Sometimes, breathing between his teeth, he will twirl the end of it upon his stretched-out toe; and this means, that he has an infinite number of easy and powerful things to say, if he had a mind. Sometimes he holds it upright between his knees, and tattoos it against his teeth or under-lip, which implies that he meditates coolly. On other occasions he switches the side of his boot with it, which announces elegance in general. Lastly, if he has not a bon-mot ready in answer to one, he has only to thrust his stick at your ribs, and say, 'Ah! you rogue!' which sets him above you in an instant, as a sort of patronising wit, who can dispense with the necessity of joking.

At the same time, to give it its due zest in life, a stick has its inconveniences. If you have yellow gloves on, and drop it in the mud, a too hasty recovery is awkward. To have it stick between the stones of a pavement is not

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

pleasant, especially if it snap the ferule off; or more especially if an old gentleman or lady is coming behind you, and after making them start back with winking eyes, it threatens to trip them up. To lose the ferule on a country road, renders the end liable to the growth of a sordid brush, which, not having a knife with you, or a shop in which to borrow one, goes pounding the wet up against your legs. In a crowded street you may have the stick driven into a large pane of glass; upon which an unthinking tradesman, utterly indifferent to a chain of events, issues forth and demands twelve and sixpence.

LEIGH HUNT.

THE OLD LADY

IF the Old Lady is a widow and lives alone, the manners of her condition and time of life are so much the more apparent. She generally dresses in plain silks, that make a gentle rustling as she moves about the silence of her room; and she wears a nice cap with a lace border, that comes under the chin. In a placket at her side is an old enamelled watch, unless it is locked up in a drawer of her toilet, for fear of accidents. Her waist is rather tight and trim than otherwise, as she had a fine one when young; and she is not sorry if you see a pair of her stockings on a table, that you may be aware of the neatness of her leg and foot. Contented with these and other evident indications of a good shape, and letting her young friends understand that she can afford to obscure it a little, she wears pockets, and uses them well too. In the one is her handkerchief, and any heavier matter that is not likely to come out with it, such as the change of a sixpence; in the other is a miscellaneous assortment, consisting of a pocket-book, a bunch of keys, a needle-case, a spectacle-case, crumbs of biscuit, a nutmeg and grater, a smelling-bottle, and, according to the season, an orange or apple, which after many days she draws out, warm and glossy, to give to some little child that has well behaved itself. She generally occupies two rooms, in the neatest condition possible. In the chamber is a bed with a white coverlet, built up high and round, to look well, and with curtains of a pastoral pattern, consisting alternately of large plants, and shepherds and shepherdesses. On the mantel-piece are more shepherds and shepherdesses, with dot-eyed sheep at their feet, all in coloured ware: the man, perhaps, in a pink jacket and knots of ribbons at his knees and shoes, holding his crook lightly in one hand, and with the other at his breast, turning his toes out

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

and looking tenderly at the shepherdess: the woman holding a crook also, and modestly returning his look, with a gipsy-hat jerked up behind, a very slender waist, with petticoat and hips to counteract, and the petticoat pulled up through the pocket-holes, in order to show the trimness of her ankles. But these patterns, of course, are various. The toilet is ancient, carved at the edges, and tied about with a snow-white drapery of muslin. Beside it are various boxes, mostly japan; and the set of drawers are exquisite things for a little girl to rummage, if ever little girl be so bold,—containing ribbons and laces of various kinds; linen smelling of lavender, of the flowers of which there is always dust in the corners; a heap of pocket-books for a series of years; and pieces of dress long gone by, such as head-fronts, stomachers, and flowered satin shoes, with enormous heels. The stock of letters are under especial lock and key. So much for the bedroom. In the sitting-room is rather a spare assortment of shining old mahogany furniture, or carved arm-chairs equally old, with chintz draperies down to the ground; a folding or other screen, with Chinese figures, their round, little-eyed, meek faces perking sideways; a stuffed bird, perhaps in a glass case (a living one is too much for her); a portrait of her husband over the mantel-piece, in a coat with frog-buttons, and a delicate frilled hand lightly inserted in the waistcoat; and opposite him on the wall, is a piece of embroidered literature, framed and glazed, containing some moral distich or maxim, worked in angular capital letters, with two trees or parrots below, in their proper colours; the whole concluding with an ABC and numerals, and the name of the fair industrious, expressing it to be ‘her work, Jan. 14, 1762.’ The rest of the furniture consists of a looking-glass with carved edges, perhaps a settee, a hassock for the feet, a mat for the little dog, and a small set of shelves, in which are the *Spectator* and *Guardian*, the *Turkish Spy*, a *Bible* and *Prayer Book*, *Young’s Night Thoughts* with a piece of lace in it to flatten, *Mrs. Rowe’s*

THE OLD LADY

Devout Exercises of the Heart, *Mrs. Glasse's Cookery*, and perhaps *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *Clarissa*. *John Bunce* is in the closet among the pickles and preserves. The clock is on the landing-place between the two room doors, where it ticks audibly but quietly; and the landing-place, as well as the stairs, is carpeted to a nicety. The house is most in character, and properly coeval, if it is in a retired suburb, and strongly built, with wainscot rather than paper inside, and lockers in the windows. Before the windows should be some quivering poplars. Here the Old Lady receives a few quiet visitors to tea, and perhaps an early game at cards: or you may see her going out on the same kind of visit herself, with a light umbrella running up into a stick and crooked ivory handle, and her little dog, equally famous for his love to her and captious antipathy to strangers. Her grandchildren dislike him on holidays, and the boldest sometimes ventures to give him a sly kick under the table. When she returns at night, she appears, if the weather happens to be doubtful, in a calash; and her servant in pattens, follows half behind and half at her side, with a lantern.

Her opinions are not many nor new. She thinks the clergyman a nice man. The Duke of Wellington, in her opinion, is a very great man; but she has a secret preference for the Marquis of Granby. She thinks the young women of the present day too forward, and the men not respectful enough; but hopes her grandchildren will be better; though she differs with her daughter in several points respecting their management. She sets little value on the new accomplishments: is a great though delicate connoisseur in butcher's meat and all sorts of housewifery; and if you mention waltzes, expatiates on the grace and fine breeding of the minuet. She longs to have seen one danced by Sir Charles Grandison, whom she almost considers as a real person. She likes a walk of a summer's evening, but avoids the new streets, canals, &c., and sometimes goes through the

JAMES HENRY LEIGH HUNT

church-yard, where her children and her husband lie buried, serious, but not melancholy. She has had three great epochs in her life:—her marriage—her having been at court, to see the King and Queen and Royal Family—and a compliment on her figure she once received, in passing, from Mr. Wilkes, whom she describes as a sad, loose man, but engaging. His plainness she thinks much exaggerated. If anything takes her at a distance from home, it is still the court; but she seldom stirs, even for that. The last time but one that she went was to see the Duke of Wirtemberg; and most probably for the last time of all, to see the Princess Charlotte and Prince Leopold. From this beatific vision she returned with the same admiration as ever for the fine comely appearance of the Duke of York and the rest of the family, and great delight at having had a near view of the Princess, whom she speaks of with smiling pomp and lifted mittens, clasping them as passionately as she can together, and calling her, in a transport of mixed loyalty and self-love, a fine royal young creature, and ‘ Daughter of England.’

LEIGH HUNT.

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

WHEN I think I deserve particularly well of myself, and have earned the right to enjoy a little treat, I stroll from Covent-garden into the City of London, after business hours there, on a Saturday, or—better yet—on a Sunday, and roam about its deserted nooks and corners. It is necessary to the full enjoyment of these journeys that they should be made in summer-time, for then the retired spots that I love to haunt are at their idlest and dullest. A gentle fall of rain is not objectionable, and a warm mist sets off my favourite retreats to decided advantage.

Among these, City Churchyards hold a high place. Such strange churchyards hide in the City of London; churchyards sometimes so entirely detached from churches, always so pressed upon by houses; so small, so rank, so silent, so forgotten, except by the few people who ever look down into them from their smoky windows. As I stand peeping in through the iron gates and rails, I can peel the rusty metal off, like bark from an old tree. The illegible tombstones are all lop-sided, the grave-mounds lost their shape in the rains of a hundred years ago, the Lombardy Poplar or Plane-Tree that was once a drysalter's daughter and several common-councilmen, has withered like those worthies, and its departed leaves are dust beneath it. Contagion of slow ruin overhangs the place. The discoloured tiled roofs of the envioning buildings stand so awry, that they can hardly be proof against any stress of weather. Old crazy stacks of chimneys seem to look down as they overhang, dubiously calculating how far they will have to fall. In an angle of the walls, what was once the tool-house of the grave-digger rots away, encrusted with toadstools. Pipes and spouts for carrying off the rain from the encompassing gables, broken or feloniously cut for old lead long ago, now let the rain drip and

CHARLES DICKENS

splash as it list upon the weedy earth. Sometimes there is a rusty pump somewhere near, and, as I look in at the rails and meditate, I hear it working under an unknown hand with a creaking protest: as though the departed in the churchyard urged, 'Let us lie here in peace; don't suck us up and drink us!'

One of my best beloved churchyards, I call the churchyard of Saint Ghastly Grim; touching what men in general call it, I have no information. It lies at the heart of the City, and the Blackwall Railway shrieks at it daily. It is a small small churchyard, with a ferocious strong spiked iron gate, like a jail. This gate is ornamented with skulls and cross-bones, larger than the life, wrought in stone; but it likewise came into the mind of Saint Ghastly Grim, that to stick iron spikes a-top of the stone skulls, as though they were impaled, would be a pleasant device. Therefore the skulls grin aloft horribly, thrust through and through with iron spears. Hence, there is attraction of repulsion for me in Saint Ghastly Grim, and, having often contemplated it in the daylight and the dark, I once felt drawn towards it in a thunder-storm at midnight. 'Why not?' I said, in self-excuse. 'I have been to see the Colosseum by the light of the moon; is it worse to go to see Saint Ghastly Grim by the light of the lightning?' I repaired to the Saint in a hackney cab, and found the skulls most effective, having the air of a public execution, and seeming, as the lightning flashed, to wink and grin with the pain of the spikes. Having no other person to whom to impart my satisfaction, I communicated it to the driver. So far from being responsive, he surveyed me—he was naturally a bottle-nosed, red-faced man—with a blanched countenance. And as he drove me back, he ever and again glanced in over his shoulder through the little front window of his carriage, as mistrusting that I was a fare originally from a grave in the churchyard of Saint Ghastly Grim, who might have flitted home again without paying.

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

Sometimes, the queer Hall of some queer Company gives upon a churchyard such as this, and, when the Livery dine, you may hear them (if you are looking in through the iron rails, which you never are when I am) toasting their own Worshipful prosperity. Sometimes, a wholesale house of business, requiring much room for stowage, will occupy one or two or even all three sides of the enclosing space, and the backs of bales of goods will lumber up the windows, as if they were holding some crowded trade-meeting of themselves within. Sometimes, the commanding windows are all blank, and show no more sign of life than the graves below—not so much, for *they* tell of what once upon a time was life undoubtedly. Such was the surrounding of one City churchyard that I saw last summer, on a Volunteering Saturday evening towards eight of the clock, when with astonishment I beheld an old old man and an old old woman in it, making hay. Yes, of all occupations in this world, making hay! It was a very confined patch of churchyard lying between Gracechurch-street and the Tower, capable of yielding, say an apronful of hay. By what means the old old man and woman got into it, with an almost toothless hay-making rake, I could not fathom. No open window was within view; no window at all was within view, sufficiently near the ground to have enabled their old legs to descend from it; the rusty churchyard-gate was locked, the mouldy church was locked. Gravely among the graves, they made hay, all alone by themselves. They looked like Time and his wife. There was but one rake between them and they both had hold of it in a pastorally-loving manner, and there was hay on the old woman's black bonnet, as if the old man had recently been playful. The old man was quite an obsolete old man, in knee-breeches and coarse grey stockings, and the old woman wore mittens like unto his stockings in texture and in colour. They took no heed of me as I looked on, unable to account for them. The old woman was much too bright for a

CHARLES DICKENS

pew-opener, the old man much too meek for a beadle. On an old tombstone in the foreground between me and them, were two cherubim; but for those celestial embellishments being represented as having no possible use for knee-breeches, stockings, or mittens, I should have compared them with the hay-makers, and sought a likeness. I coughed and awoke the echoes, but the hay-makers never looked at me. They used the rake with a measured action, drawing the scanty crop towards them; and so I was fain to leave them under three yards and a half of darkening sky, gravely making hay among the graves, all alone by themselves. Perhaps they were Spectres, and I wanted a Medium.

In another City churchyard of similar cramped dimensions, I saw, that selfsame summer, two comfortable charity children. They were making love—tremendous proof of the vigour of that immortal article, for they were in the graceful uniform under which English Charity delights to hide herself—and they were overgrown, and their legs (his legs at least, for I am modestly incompetent to speak of hers) were as much in the wrong as mere passive weakness of character can render legs. O it was a leaden churchyard, but no doubt a golden ground to those young persons! I first saw them on a Saturday evening, and, perceiving from their occupation that Saturday evening was their trysting time, I returned that evening se'nnight, and renewed the contemplation of them. They came there to shake the bits of matting which were spread in the church aisles, and they afterwards rolled them up, he rolling his end, she rolling hers, until they met, and over the two once divided now united rolls—sweet emblem!—gave and received a chaste salute. It was so refreshing to find one of my faded churchyards blooming into flower thus, that I returned a second time, and a third, and ultimately this befell:—They had left the church door open, in their dusting and arranging. Walking in to look at the church, I became aware, by the dim light, of him in the pulpit,

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

of her in the reading-desk, of him looking down, of her looking up, exchanging tender discourse. Immediately both dived, and became as it were non-existent on this sphere. With an assumption of innocence I turned to leave the sacred edifice, when an obese form stood in the portal, puffily demanding Joseph, or in default of Joseph, Celia. Taking this monster by the sleeve, and luring him forth on pretence of showing him whom he sought, I gave time for the emergence of Joseph and Celia, who presently came towards us in the churchyard, bending under dusty matting, a picture of thriving and unconscious industry. It would be superfluous to hint that I have ever since deemed this the proudest passage in my life.

But such instances, or any tokens of vitality, are rare indeed in my City churchyards. A few sparrows occasionally try to raise a lively chirrup in their solitary tree—perhaps, as taking a different view of worms from that entertained by humanity—but they are flat and hoarse of voice, like the clerk, the organ, the bell, the clergyman, and all the rest of the Church-works when they are wound up for Sunday. Caged larks, thrushes, or blackbirds, hanging in neighbouring courts, pour forth their strains passionately, as scenting the tree, trying to break out, and see leaves again before they die, but their song is Willow, Willow—of a churchyard cast. So little light lives inside the churches of my churchyards, when the two are co-existent, that it is often only by an accident and after long acquaintance that I discover their having stained glass in some odd window. The westering sun slants into the churchyard by some unwonted entry, a few prismatic tears drop on an old tombstone, and a window that I thought was only dirty, is for the moment all bejewelled. Then the light passes and the colours die. Though even then, if there be room enough for me to fall back so far as that I can gaze up to the top of the Church Tower, I see the rusty vane new burnished, and seeming to look out with

CHARLES DICKENS

a joyful flash over the sea of smoke at the distant shore of country.

Blinking old men who are let out of workhouses by the hour have a tendency to sit on bits of coping stone in these churchyards, leaning with both hands on their sticks and asthmatically gasping. The more depressed class of beggars, too, bring hither broken meats, and munch. I am on nodding terms with a meditative turn-cock who lingers in one of them, and whom I suspect of a turn for poetry; the rather as he looks out of temper when he gives the fire-plug a disparaging wrench with that large tuning-fork of his which would wear out the shoulder of his coat, but for a precautionary piece of inlaid leather. Fire-ladders, which I am satisfied nobody knows anything about, and the keys of which were lost in ancient times, moulder away in the larger churchyards, under eaves like wooden eyebrows; and so removed are those corners from the haunts of men and boys, that once on a fifth of November I found a 'Guy' trusted to take care of himself there, while his proprietors had gone to dinner. Of the expression of his face I cannot report, because it was turned to the wall; but his shrugged shoulders and his ten extended fingers, appeared to denote that he had moralised in his little straw chair on the mystery of mortality until he gave it up as a bad job.

You do not come upon these churchyards violently; there are shades of transition in the neighbourhood. An antiquated news shop, or barber's shop, apparently bereft of customers in the earlier days of George the Third, would warn me to look out for one, if any discoveries in this respect were left for me to make. A very quiet court, in combination with an unaccountable dyer's and scourer's, would prepare me for a churchyard. An exceedingly retiring public-house, with a bagatelle-board shadily visible in a sawdusty parlour shaped like an omnibus, and with a shelf of punch-bowls in the bar, would apprise me that I stood near

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

consecrated ground. A 'Dairy,' exhibiting in its modest window one very little milk-can and three eggs, would suggest to me the certainty of finding the poultry hard by, pecking at my forefathers. I first inferred the vicinity of Saint Ghastly Grim, from a certain air of extra repose and gloom pervading a vast stack of warehouses.

From the hush of these places, it is congenial to pass into the hushed resorts of business. Down the lanes I like to see the carts and waggons huddled together in repose, the cranes idle, and the warehouses shut. Pausing in the alleys behind the closed Banks of mighty Lombard-street, it gives one as good as a rich feeling to think of the broad counters with a rim along the edge, made for telling money out on, the scales for weighing precious metals, the ponderous ledgers, and, above all, the bright copper shovels for shovelling gold. When I draw money, it never seems so much money as when it is shovelled at me out of a bright copper shovel. I like to say, 'In gold,' and to see seven pounds musically pouring out of the shovel, like seventy; the Bank appearing to remark to me—I italicise *appearing*—'if you want more of this yellow earth, we keep it in barrows at your service.' To think of the banker's clerk with his deft finger turning the crisp edges of the Hundred-Pound Notes he has taken in a fat roll out of a drawer is again to hear the rustling of that delicious south-cash wind. 'How will you have it?' I once heard this usual question asked at a Bank Counter of an elderly female, habited in mourning and steeped in simplicity, who answered, open-eyed, crook-fingered, laughing with expectation, 'Anyhow!' Calling these things to mind as I stroll among the Banks, I wonder whether the other solitary Sunday man I pass has designs upon the Banks. For the interest and mystery of the matter, I almost hope he may have, and that his confederate may be at this moment taking impressions of the keys of the iron closets in wax, and that a delightful robbery may be in course of

CHARLES DICKENS

transaction. About College-hill, Mark-lane, and so on towards the Tower, and Dockward, the deserted wine-merchants' cellars are fine subjects for consideration: but the deserted money-cellars of the Bankers, and their plate-cellars, and their jewel-cellars, what subterranean regions of the Wonderful Lamp are these! And again: possibly some shoeless boy in rags passed through this street yesterday, for whom it is reserved to be a Banker in the fulness of time, and to be surpassing rich. Such reverses have been, since the days of Whittington; and were, long before. I want to know whether the boy has any foreglittering of that glittering fortune now, when he treads these stones, hungry. Much as I also want to know whether the next man to be hanged at Newgate yonder had any suspicion upon him that he was moving steadily towards that fate, when he talked so much about the last man who paid the same great debt at the same small Debtors' Door.

Where are all the people who on busy working-days pervade these stenes? The locomotive banker's clerk, who carries a black portfolio chained to him by a chain of steel, where is he? Does he go to bed with his chain on—to church with his chain on—or does he lay it by? And if he lays it by, what becomes of his portfolio when he is unchained for a holiday? The wastepaper baskets of these closed counting-houses would let me into many hints of business matters if I had the exploration of them; and what secrets of the heart should I discover on the 'pads' of the young clerks—the sheets of cartridge-paper and blotting-paper interposed between their writing and their desks! Pads are taken into confidence on the tenderest occasions, and oftentimes when I have made a business visit, and have sent in my name from the outer office, have I had it forced on my discursive notice that the officiating young gentleman has over and over again inscribed AMELIA, in ink of various dates, on corners of his pad. Indeed, the pad may be regarded as the legitimate modern successor of the old forest-tree:

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

whereon these young knights (having no attainable forest nearer than Epping) engrave the names of their mistresses. After all it is a more satisfactory process than carving, and can be oftener repeated. So these courts in their Sunday rest are courts of Love Omnipotent (I rejoice to bethink myself), dry as they look. And here is Garraway's, bolted and shuttered hard and fast! It is possible to imagine the man who cuts the sandwiches, on his back in a hayfield; it is possible to imagine his desk, like the desk of a clerk at church, without him; but imagination is unable to pursue the men who wait at Garraway's all the week for the men who never come. When they are forcibly put out of Garraway's on Saturday night—which they must be, for they never would go out of their own accord—where do they vanish until Monday morning? On the first Sunday that I ever strayed here, I expected to find them hovering about these lanes, like restless ghosts, and trying to peep into Garraway's through chinks in the shutters, if not endeavouring to turn the lock of the door with false keys, picks, and screw-drivers. But the wonder is, that they go clean away! And now I think of it, the wonder is, that every working-day pervader of these scenes goes clean away. The man who sells the dogs' collars and the little toy coal-scuttles, feels under as great an obligation to go afar off, as Glyn and Co., or Smith, Payne, and Smith. There is an old monastery-crypt under Garraway's (I have been in it among the port wine), and perhaps Garraway's, taking pity on the mouldy men who wait in its public-room all their lives, gives them cool houseroom down there over Sundays; but the catacombs of Paris would not be large enough to hold the rest of the missing. This characteristic of London City greatly helps its being the quaint place it is in the weekly pause of business, and greatly helps my Sunday sensation in it of being the Last Man. In my solitude, the ticket-porters being all gone with the rest, I venture to breathe to the quiet bricks and stones my

CHARLES DICKENS

confidential wonderment why a ticket-porter, who never does any work with his hands, is bound to wear a white apron, and why a great Ecclesiastical Dignitary, who never does any work with his hands either, is equally bound to wear a black one.

CHARLES DICKENS.

BROKERS' AND MARINE-STORE SHOPS

WHEN we affirm that brokers' shops are strange places, and that if an authentic history of their contents could be procured, it would furnish many a page of amusement and many a melancholy tale, it is necessary to explain the class of shops to which we allude. Perhaps when we make use of the term 'Brokers' Shop,' the minds of our readers will at once picture large, handsome warehouses, exhibiting a long perspective of French-polished dining-tables, rosewood chiffoniers, and mahogany wash-hand-stands, with an occasional vista of a four-post bedstead and hangings, and an appropriate foreground of dining-room chairs. Perhaps they will imagine that we mean a humble class of second-hand furniture repositories. Their imagination will then naturally lead them to that street at the back of Long Acre, which is composed almost entirely of brokers' shops; where you walk through groves of deceitful, showy-looking furniture, and where the prospect is occasionally enlivened by a bright red, blue, and yellow hearth-rug, embellished with the pleasing device of a mail-coach at full speed, or a strange animal, supposed to have been originally intended for a dog, with a mass of worsted-work in his mouth, which conjecture has likened to a basket of flowers.

This, by the by, is a tempting article to young wives in the humbler ranks of life, who have a first-floor front to furnish—they are lost in admiration, and hardly know which to admire most. The dog is very beautiful, but they have a dog already on the best tea-tray, and two more on the mantelpiece. Then, there is something so genteel about that mail-coach; and the passengers outside (who are all hat) give it such an air of reality!

The goods here are adapted to the taste, or rather to the means, of cheap purchasers. There are some

CHARLES DICKENS

of the most beautiful *looking* Pembroke tables that were ever beheld: the wood as green as the trees in the Park, and the leaves almost as certain to fall off in the course of a year. There is also a most extensive assortment of tent and turn-up bedsteads, made of stained wood, and innumerable specimens of that base imposition on society—a sofa bedstead.

A turn-up bedstead is a blunt, honest piece of furniture; it may be slightly disguised with a sham drawer; and sometimes a mad attempt is even made to pass it off for a bookcase; ornament it as you will, however, the turn-up bedstead seems to defy disguise, and to insist on having it distinctly understood that he is a turn-up bedstead, and nothing else—that he is indispensably necessary, and that being so useful, he disdains to be ornamental.

How different is the demeanour of a sofa bedstead! Ashamed of its real use, it strives to appear an article of luxury and gentility—an attempt in which it miserably fails. It has neither the respectability of a sofa, nor the virtues of a bed; every man who keeps a sofa bedstead in his house, becomes a party to a wilful and designing fraud—we question whether you could insult him more, than by insinuating that you entertain the least suspicion of its real use.

To return from this digression, we beg to say, that neither of these classes of brokers' shops forms the subject of this sketch. The shops to which we advert, are immeasurably inferior to those on whose outward appearance we have slightly touched. Our readers must often have observed in some by-street, in a poor neighbourhood, a small dirty shop, exposing for sale the most extraordinary and confused jumble of old, worn-out, wretched articles, that can well be imagined. Our wonder at their ever having been bought, is only to be equalled by our astonishment at the idea of their ever being sold again. On a board, at the side of the door, are placed about twenty books—all odd volumes; and as

BROKERS' AND MARINE-STORE SHOPS

many wine-glasses—all different patterns; several locks, an old earthenware pan, full of rusty keys; two or three gaudy chimney-ornaments—cracked, of course; the remains of a lustre, without any drops; a round frame like a capital O, which has once held a mirror; a flute, complete with the exception of the middle joint; a pair of curling-irons; and a tinder-box. In front of the shop window are ranged some half-dozen high-backed chairs, with spinal complaints and wasted legs; a corner cupboard; two or three very dark mahogany tables with flaps like mathematical problems; some pickle-jars, some surgeons' ditto, with gilt labels and without stoppers; an unframed portrait of some lady who flourished about the beginning of the thirteenth century, by an artist who never flourished at all; an incalculable host of miscellanies of every description, including bottles and cabinets, rags and bones, fenders and street-door knockers, fire-irons, wearing apparel and bedding, a hall-lamp, and a room-door. Imagine, in addition to this incongruous mass, a black doll in a white frock, with two faces—one looking up the street, and the other looking down, swinging over the door; a board with the squeezed-up inscription 'Dealer in marine stores,' in lanky white letters, whose height is strangely out of proportion to their width; and you have before you precisely the kind of shop to which we wish to direct your attention.

Although the same heterogeneous mixture of things will be found at all these places, it is curious to observe how truly and accurately some of the minor articles which are exposed for sale—articles of wearing apparel, for instance—mark the character of the neighbourhood. Take Drury Lane and Covent Garden for example.

This is essentially a theatrical neighbourhood. There is not a potboy in the vicinity who is not, to a greater or less extent, a dramatic character. The errand-boys and chandler's-shop-keepers' sons are all stage-struck: they 'gets up' plays in back kitchens hired for the

CHARLES DICKENS

purpose, and will stand before a shop-window for hours, contemplating a great staring portrait of Mr. Somebody or other, of the Royal Coburg Theatre, 'as he appeared in the character of Tongo the Denounced.' The consequence is, that there is not a marine-store shop in the neighbourhood, which does not exhibit for sale some faded articles of dramatic finery, such as three or four pairs of soiled buff boots with turn-over red tops, heretofore worn by a 'fourth robber,' or 'fifth mob'; a pair of rusty broadswords, a few gauntlets, and certain resplendent ornaments, which, if they were yellow instead of white, might be taken for insurance plates of the Sun Fire Office. There are several of these shops in the narrow streets and dirty courts, of which there are so many near the national theatres, and they all have tempting goods of this description, with the addition, perhaps, of a lady's pink dress covered with spangles; white wreaths, stage shoes, and a tiara like a tin lamp reflector. They have been purchased of some wretched supernumeraries, or sixth-rate actors, and are now offered for the benefit of the rising generation, who, on condition of making certain weekly payments, amounting in the whole to about ten times their value, may avail themselves of such desirable bargains.

Let us take a very different quarter, and apply it to the same test. Look at a marine-store dealer's, in that reservoir of dirt, drunkenness, and drabs: thieves, oysters, baked potatoes, and pickled salmon—Ratcliff Highway. Here, the wearing apparel is all nautical. Rough blue jackets, with mother-of-pearl buttons, oil-skin hats, coarse checked shirts, and large canvas trousers that look as if they were made for a pair of bodies instead of a pair of legs, are the staple commodities. Then, there are large bunches of cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, in colour and pattern unlike any one ever saw before, with the exception of those on the backs of the three young ladies without bonnets who passed just now. The furniture is much the same as elsewhere,

BROKERS' AND MARINE-STORE SHOPS

with the addition of one or two models of ships, and some old prints of naval engagements in still older frames. In the window are a few compasses, a small tray containing silver watches in clumsy thick cases; and tobacco-boxes, the lid of each ornamented with a ship, or an anchor, or some such trophy. A sailor generally pawns or sells all he has before he has been long ashore, and if he does not, some favoured companion kindly saves him the trouble. In either case, it is an even chance that he afterwards unconsciously repurchases the same things at a higher price than he gave for them at first.

Again: pay a visit with a similar object, to a part of London, as unlike both of these as they are to each other. Cross over to the Surrey side, and look at such shops of this description as are to be found near the King's Bench prison, and in 'the Rules'. How different, and how strikingly illustrative of the decay of some of the unfortunate residents in this part of the metropolis! Imprisonment and neglect have done their work. There is contamination in the profligate denizens of a debtor's prison; old friends have fallen off; the recollection of former prosperity has passed away; and with it all thoughts for the past, all care for the future. First, watches and rings, then cloaks, coats, and all the more expensive articles of dress, have found their way to the pawnbroker's. That miserable resource has failed at last, and the sale of some trifling article at one of these shops has been the only mode left of raising a shilling or two, to meet the urgent demands of the moment. Dressing-cases and writing-desks, too old to pawn but too good to keep; guns, fishing-rods, musical instruments, all in the same condition; have first been sold, and the sacrifice has been but slightly felt. But hunger must be allayed, and what has already become a habit is easily resorted to, when an emergency arises. Light articles of clothing, first of the ruined man, then of his wife, at last of their children, even of the youngest, have been parted with, piecemeal. There they are,

CHARLES DICKENS

thrown carelessly together until a purchaser presents himself, old, and patched and repaired, it is true; but the make and materials tell of better days; and the older they are, the greater the misery and destitution of those whom they once adorned.

CHARLES DICKENS.

ON A CHALK-MARK ON THE DOOR.

ON the doorpost of the house of a friend of mine, a few inches above the lock, is a little chalk-mark which some sportive boy in passing has probably scratched on the pillar. The doorsteps, the lock, handle, and so forth, are kept decently enough; but this chalk-mark, I suppose some three inches out of the housemaid's beat, has already been on the door for more than a fortnight, and I wonder whether it will be there whilst this paper is being written, whilst it is at the printer's, and, in fine, until the month passes over? I wonder whether the servants in that house will read these remarks about the chalk-mark? That *The Cornhill Magazine* is taken in in that house I know. In fact I have seen it there. In fact I have read it there. In fact I have written it there. In a word, the house to which I allude is mine—the 'editor's private residence,' to which, in spite of prayers, entreaties, commands, and threats, authors, and ladies especially, *will* send their communications, although they won't understand that they injure their own interests by so doing; for how is a man who has his own work to do, his own exquisite inventions to form and perfect—Maria to rescue from the unprincipled Earl—the atrocious General to confound in his own machinations—the angelic Dean to promote to a bishopric, and so forth—how is a man to do all this, under a hundred interruptions, and keep his nerves and temper in that just and equable state in which they ought to be when he comes to assume the critical office? As you will send here, ladies, I must tell you you have a much worse chance than if you forward your valuable articles to Cornhill. Here your papers arrive, at dinner-time, we will say. Do you suppose that is a pleasant period, and that we are to criticise you between the *ovum* and *malum*,

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

between the soup and the dessert? I have touched, I think, on this subject before. I say again, if you want real justice shown you, don't send your papers to the private residence. At home, for instance, yesterday, having given strict orders that I was to receive nobody, 'except on business,' do you suppose a smiling young Scottish gentleman, who forced himself into my study, and there announced himself as agent of a Cattle-food Company, was received with pleasure? There, as I sat in my arm-chair, suppose he had proposed to draw a couple of my teeth, would I have been pleased? I could have throttled that agent. I daresay the whole of that day's work will be found tinged with a ferocious misanthropy, occasioned by my clever young friend's intrusion. Cattle-food, indeed! As if beans, oats, warm mashies, and a ball, are to be pushed down a man's throat just as he is meditating on the great social problem, or (for I think it was my epic I was going to touch up) just as he was about to soar to the height of the empyrean!

Having got my cattle-agent out of the door, I resume my consideration of that little mark on the doorpost, which is scored up as the text of the present little sermon; and which I hope will relate, not to chalk, nor to any of its special uses or abuses (such as milk, neck-powder, and the like), but to servants. Surely ours might remove that unseemly little mark? Suppose it were on my coat, might I not request its removal? I remember, when I was at school, a little careless boy, upon whose forehead an ink mark remained, and was perfectly recognisable for three weeks after its first appearance. May I take any notice of this chalk-stain on the forehead of my house? Whose business is it to wash that forehead? and ought I to fetch a brush and a little hot water, and wash it off myself?

Yes. But that spot removed, why not come down at six, and wash the doorstep? I daresay the early rising and exercise would do me a great deal of good. The house-

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

maid, in that case, might lie in bed a little later, and have her tea and the morning paper brought to her in bed; then, of course, Thomas would expect to be helped about the boots and knives; cook about the saucepans, dishes, and what not; the lady's-maid would want somebody to take the curl-papers out of her hair, and get her bath ready. You should have a set of servants for the servants, and these under-servants should have slaves to wait on them. The king commands the first lord in waiting to desire the second lord to intimate to the gentleman usher to request the page of the antechamber to entreat the groom of the stairs to implore John to ask the captain of the buttons to desire the maid of the still-room to beg the housekeeper to give out a few more lumps of sugar, as his Majesty has none for his coffee, which probably is getting cold during the negotiation. In our little Brentfords we are all kings, more or less. There are orders, gradations, hierarchies, everywhere. In your house and mine there are mysteries unknown to us. I am not going into the horrid old question of 'followers.' I don't mean cousins from the country, love-stricken policemen, or gentlemen in mufti from Knightsbridge Barracks; but people who have an occult right on the premises: the uncovenanted servants of the house; grey women who are seen at evening with baskets flitting about area-railings; dingy shawls which drop you furtive curtsies in your neighbourhood; demure little Jacks, who start up from behind boxes in the pantry. Those outsiders wear Thomas's crest and livery, and call him 'Sir'; those silent women address the female servants as 'Mum,' and curtsy before them, squaring their arms over their wretched lean aprons. Then, again, those *servi servorum* have dependants in the vast, silent, poverty-stricken world outside your comfortable kitchen fire, in the world of darkness, and hunger, and miserable cold, and dank flagged cellars, and huddled straw, and rags, in which pale children are swarming. It may be your beer (which runs with great volubility) has a pipe or two which

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

communicates with those dark caverns where hopeless anguish pours the groan, and would scarce see light but for a scrap or two of candle which has been whipped away from your worship's kitchen. Not many years ago—I don't know whether before or since that white mark was drawn on the door—a lady occupied the confidential place of housemaid in this 'private residence,' who brought a good character, who seemed to have a cheerful temper, whom I used to hear clattering and bumping overhead or on the stairs long before daylight (for, you see, ever since the *Superfine Review* said I wasn't a gentleman I have lost my sleep, and lie awake trying to think how to be one, and if I could get that kind critic to come and give me and my family lessons)—there, I say, was poor Camilla, scouring the plain, trundling and brushing, and clattering with her pans and brooms, and humming at her work. Well, she had established a smuggling communication of beer over the area frontier. This neat-handed Phillis used to pack up the nicest baskets of my provender, and convey them to somebody outside—I believe, on my conscience, to some poor friend in distress. Camilla was consigned to her doom. She was sent back to her friends in the country; and when she was gone we heard of many of her faults. She expressed herself, when displeased, in language that I shall not repeat. As for the beer and meat, there was no mistake about them. But *après*? Can I have the heart to be very angry with that poor jade for helping another poorer jade out of my larder? On your honour and conscience, when you were a boy, and the apples looked tempting over Farmer Quarrington's hedge, did you never ——? When there was a grand dinner at home, and you were sliding, with Master Bacon, up and down the stairs, and the dishes came out, did you ever do such a thing as just to——? Well, in many and many a respect servants are like children. They are under domination. They are subject to reproof, to ill-temper, to petty exactions, and stupid tyrannies, not seldom. They scheme, conspire,

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

fawn, and are hypocrites. 'Little boys should not loll on chairs'; 'Little girls should be seen, and not heard'; and so forth. Have we not almost all learnt these expressions of old foozles; and uttered them ourselves when in the square-toed state? The Eton master who was breaking a lance with our Paterfamilias of late, turned on Paterfamilias, saying, He knows not the nature and exquisite candour of well-bred English boys. Exquisite fiddlestick's end, Mr. Master! Do you mean for to go for to tell us that the relations between young gentlemen and their schoolmasters are entirely frank and cordial; that the lad is familiar with the man who can have him flogged; never shirks his exercises; never gets other boys to do his verses; never does other boys' verses; never breaks bounds; never tells fibs—I mean the fibs permitted by scholastic honour? Did I know of a boy who pretended to such a character, I would forbid my scapegraces to keep company with him. Did I know a schoolmaster who pretended to believe in the existence of many hundred such boys in one school at one time, I would set that man down as a baby in knowledge of the world. 'Who was making that noise?' 'I don't know, sir.'—And he knows it was the boy next him in school. 'Who was climbing over that wall?' 'I don't know, sir.'—And it is in the speaker's own trousers, very likely, the glass bottle-tops have left their cruel scars. And so with servants. 'Who ate up the three pigeons which went down in the pigeon-pie at breakfast this morning?' 'O dear me, sir! it was John,' who went away last month!—or, 'I think it was Miss Mary's canary-bird, which got out of the cage, and is so fond of pigeons, it never can have enough of them.' Yes, it *was* the canary-bird; and Eliza saw it; and Eliza is ready to vow she did. These statements are not true; but please don't call them lies. This is not lying: this is voting with your party. You *must* back your own side. The servants' hall stands by the servants' hall against the dining-room. The school-boys don't tell tales of each other. They agree not to

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

choose to know who has made the noise, who has broken the window, who has eaten up the pigeons, who has picked all the plovers' eggs out of the aspic, how it is that liqueur brandy of Gledstones is in such porous glass bottles—and so forth. Suppose Brutus had a footman, who came and told him that the butler drank the Curaçoa, which of these servants would you dismiss?—the butler, perhaps, but the footman certainly.

No. If your plate and glass are beautifully bright, your bell quickly answered, and Thomas ready, neat, and good-humoured, you are not to expect absolute truth from him. The very obsequiousness and perfection of his service prevents truth. He may be ever so unwell in mind or body, and he must go through his service—hand the shining plate, replenish the spotless glass, lay the glittering fork—never laugh when you yourself or your guests joke—be profoundly attentive, and yet look utterly impassive—exchange a few hurried curses at the door with that unseen slavey who ministers without, and with you be perfectly calm and polite. If you are ill, he will come twenty times in an hour to your bell; or leave the girl of his heart—his mother, who is going to America—his dearest friend, who has come to say farewell—his lunch, and his glass of beer just freshly poured out—any or all of these, if the door-bell rings, or the master calls out 'THOMAS' from the hall. Do you suppose you can expect absolute candour from a man whom you may order to powder his hair? As between the Reverend Henry Holyshade and his pupil, the idea of entire unreserve is utter bosh; so the truth as between you and Jeames or Thomas, or Mary the housemaid, or Betty the cook, is relative, and not to be demanded on one side or the other. Why, respectful civility is itself a lie, which poor Jeames often has to utter or perform to many a swaggering vulgarian, who should black Jeames's boots, did Jeames wear them and not shoes. There is your little Tom, just ten, ordering the great, large, quiet, orderly young man about—

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

shrinking calls for hot water—bullying Jeames because the boots are not varnished enough, or ordering him to go to the stables, and ask Jenkins why the deuce Tomkins hasn't brought his pony round—or what you will. There is mamma rapping the knuckles of Pincot the lady's-maid, and little miss scolding Martha, who waits up five-pair of stairs in the nursery. Little miss, Tommy, papa, mamma, you all expect from Martha, from Pincot, from Jenkins, from Jeames, obsequious civility and willing service. My dear good people, you can't have truth too. Suppose you ask for your newspaper, and Jeames says, 'I'm reading it, and jest beg not to be disturbed'; or suppose you ask for a can of water, and he remarks, 'You great, big, 'ulking fellar, ain't you big enough to bring it hup yoursulf?' what would your feelings be? Now, if you made similar proposals or requests to Mr. Jones next door, this is the kind of answer Jones would give you. You get truth habitually from equals only; so, my good Mr. Holyshade, don't talk to me about the habitual candour of the young Etonian of high birth, or I have my own opinion of *your* candour or discernment when you do. No. Tom Bowling is the soul of honour, and has been true to Black-eyed Syousan since the last time they parted at Wapping Old Stairs; but do you suppose Tom is perfectly frank, familiar, and above-board in his conversation with Admiral Nelson, K.C.B.? There are secrets, prevarications, fibs, if you will, between Tom and the Admiral—between your crew and *their* captain. I know I hire a worthy, clean, agreeable, and conscientious male or female hypocrite, at so many guineas a year, to do so and so for me. Were he other than hypocrite I would send him about his business. Don't let my displeasure be too fierce with him for a fib or two on his own account.

Some dozen years ago, my family being absent in a distant part of the country, and my business detaining me in London, I remained in my own house with three servants on board wages. I used only to breakfast at

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

home; and future ages will be interested to know that this meal used to consist, at that period, of tea, a penny roll, a pat of butter, and, perhaps, an egg. My weekly bill used invariably to be about fifty shillings; so that as I never dined in the house, you see, my breakfast, consisting of the delicacies before mentioned, cost about seven shillings and threepence per diem. I must, therefore, have consumed daily—

	s.	d.
A quarter of a pound of tea (say)	1	3
A penny roll (say)	1	0
One pound of butter (say)	1	3
One pound of lump-sugar	1	0
A new-laid egg	2	9

Which is the only possible way I have for making out the sum.

Well, I fell ill while under this regimen, and had an illness which, but for a certain doctor, who was brought to me by a certain kind friend I had in those days, would, I think, have prevented the possibility of my telling this interesting anecdote now a dozen years after. Don't be frightened, my dear madam; it is not a horrid, sentimental account of a malady you are coming to—only a question of grocery. This illness, I say, lasted some seventeen days, during which the servants were admirably attentive and kind; and poor John, especially, was up at all hours, watching night after night—amiable, cheerful, untiring, respectful, the very best of Johns and nurses.

Twice or thrice in the seventeen days I may have had a glass of *eau sucrée*—say a dozen glasses of *eau sucrée*—certainly not more. Well, this admirable, watchful, cheerful, tender, affectionate John brought me in a little bill for seventeen pounds of sugar consumed during the illness—‘Often ’ad sugar and water; always was a callin’ for it,’ says John, wagging his head quite gravely. You are dead, years and years ago, poor John, so patient, so friendly, so kind, so cheerful to the invalid in the fever. But confess, now, wherever you are, that seventeen pounds

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

of sugar to make six glasses of *eau sucrée* was a *little* too strong, wasn't it, John? Ah, how frankly, how trustily, how bravely he lied, poor John! One evening, being at Brighton, in the convalescence, I remember John's step was unsteady, his voice thick, his laugh queer—and having some quinine to give me, John brought the glass to me—not to my mouth, but struck me with it pretty smartly in the eye, which was not the way in which Dr. Elliotson had intended his prescription should be taken. Turning that eye upon him, I ventured to hint that my attendant had been drinking. Drinking! I never was more humiliated at the thought of my own injustice than at John's reply. 'Drinking! Sulp me! I have had only one pint of beer with my dinner at one o'clock!'—and he retreats, holding on by a chair. These are fibs, you see, appertaining to the situation. John is drunk. '*Sulp* him, he has only had an 'alf-pint of beer with his dinner six hours ago'; and none of his fellow-servants will say otherwise. Polly is smuggled on board ship. Who tells the lieutenant when he comes his rounds? Boys are playing cards in the bedroom. The out-lying fag announces master coming—out go candles—cards popped into bed—boys sound asleep. Who had that light in the dormitory? Law bless you! the poor, dear innocents are every one snoring. Every one snoring, and every snore is a lie told through the nose! Suppose one of your boys or mine is engaged in that awful crime, are we going to break our hearts about it? Come, come. We pull a long face, waggle a grave head, and chuckle within our waistcoats.

Between me and those fellow-creatures of mine who are sitting in the room below, how strange and wonderful is the partition! We meet at every hour of the daylight, and are indebted to each other for a hundred offices of duty and comfort of life; and we live together for years, and don't know each other. John's voice to me is quite different from John's voice when it addresses his mates below. If I met Hannah in the

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

street with a bonnet on, I doubt whether I should know her. And all these good people with whom I may live for years and years, have cares, interests, dear friends and relatives, mayhap schemes, passions, longing hopes, tragedies of their own, from which a carpet and a few planks and beams utterly separate me. When we were at the seaside, and poor Ellen used to look so pale, and run after the postman's bell, and seize a letter in a great scrawling hand, and read it, and cry in a corner, how should we know that the poor little thing's heart was breaking? She fetched the water, and she smoothed the ribbons, and she laid out the dresses, and brought the early cup of tea in the morning, just as if she had had no cares to keep her awake. Henry (who lived out of the house) was the servant of a friend of mine who lived in chambers. There was a dinner one day, and Henry waited all through the dinner. The champagne was properly iced, the dinner was excellently served; every guest was attended to; the dinner disappeared; the dessert was set; the claret was in perfect order, carefully decanted, and more ready. And then Henry said, 'If you please, sir, may I go home?' He had received word that his house was on fire; and, having seen through his dinner, he wished to go and look after his children, and little sticks of furniture. Why, such a man's livery is a uniform of honour. The crest on his button is a badge of bravery.

Do you see—I imagine I do myself—in these little instances, a tinge of humour? Ellen's heart is breaking for handsome Jeames of Buckley Square, whose great legs are kneeling, and who has given a lock of his precious powdered head, to some other than Ellen. Henry is preparing the sauce for his master's wild-ducks while the engines are squirting over his own little nest and brood. Lift these figures up but a storey from the basement to the ground-floor, and the fun is gone. We may be *en pleine tragédie*. Ellen may breathe her last sigh in blank verse, calling down blessings upon James the

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

profligate who deserts her. Henry is a hero, and epaulettes are on his shoulders. *Atqui sciebat*, etc., whatever tortures are in store for him, he will be at his post of duty.

You concede, however, that there is a touch of humour in the two tragedies here mentioned. Why? Is it that the idea of persons at service is somehow ludicrous? Perhaps it is made more so in this country by the splendid appearance of the liveried domestics of great people. When you think that we dress in black ourselves, and put our fellow-creatures in green, pink, or canary-coloured breeches; that we order them to plaster their hair with flour, having brushed that nonsense out of our own heads fifty years ago; that some of the most genteel and stately among us cause the men who drive their carriages to put on little Albino wigs, and sit behind great nosegays—I say I suppose it is this heaping of gold lace, gaudy colours, blooming plushes, on honest John Trot, which makes the man absurd in our eyes, who need be nothing but a simple reputable citizen and in-door labourer. Suppose, my dear sir, that you yourself were suddenly desired to put on a full dress, or even undress, domestic uniform with our friend Jones's crest repeated in varied combinations of button on your front and back? Suppose, madam, your son were told that he could not go out except in lower garments of carnation or amber-coloured plush—would you let him? . . . But, as you justly say, this is not the question, and besides it is a question fraught with danger, sir; and radicalism, sir; and subversion of the very foundations of the social fabric, sir. . . . Well, John, we won't enter on your great domestic question. Don't let us disport with Jeames's dangerous strength, and the edge-tools about his knife-board: but with Betty and Susan who wield the playful mop, and set on the simmering kettle. Surely you have heard Mrs. Toddles talking to Mrs. Doddles about their mutual maids? Miss Susan must have a silk gown, and Miss Betty must wear flowers under her

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

bonnet when she goes to church if you please, and did you ever hear such impudence? The servant in many small establishments is a constant and endless theme of talk. What small wage, sleep, meal, what endless scouring, scolding, tramping on messages, fall to that poor Susan's lot; what indignation at the little kindly passing word with the grocer's young man, the pot-boy, the chubby butcher! Where such things will end, my dear Mrs. Toddles, I don't know. What wages they will want next, my dear Mrs. Doddles, etc.

Here, dear ladies, is an advertisement which I cut out of *The Times* a few days since, expressly for you:

A LADY is desirous of obtaining a SITUATION for a very respectable young woman as HEAD KITCHEN-MAID under a man-cook. She has lived four years under a very good cook and housekeeper. Can make ice, and is an excellent baker. She will only take a place in a very good family, where she can have the opportunity of improving herself, and, if possible, staying for two years. Apply by letter to, etc., etc.

There, Mrs. Toddles, what do you think of that, and did you ever? Well, no, Mrs. Doddles. Upon my word now, Mrs. T., I don't think I ever did. A respectable young woman—as head kitchen-maid—under a man-cook, will only take a place in a very good family, where she can improve, and stay two years. Just note up the conditions, Mrs. Toddles, mum, if you please, mum, and *then* let us see:—

1. This young woman is to be HEAD kitchen-maid, that is to say, there is to be a chorus of kitchen-maids, of which the Y. W. is to be chief.
2. She will only be situated under a man-cook. (A) ought he to be a French cook; and (B), if so, would the lady desire him to be a Protestant?
3. She will only take a place in a *very good family*. How old ought the family to be, and what do you call good? that is the question. How long after the Conquest will do? Would a banker's family do, or is a baronet's good enough? Best say what rank in the peerage would be sufficiently

ON A CHALK MARK ON THE DOOR

high. But the lady does not say whether she would like a high church or a low church family. Ought there to be unmarried sons, and may they follow a profession? and please say how many daughters; and would the lady like them to be musical? And how many company dinners a week? Not too many, for fear of fatiguing the upper kitchen-maid; but sufficient, so as to keep the upper kitchen-maid's hand in. [N.B.—I think I can see a rather bewildered expression on the countenance of Mesdames Doddles and Toddles as I am prattling on in this easy bantering way.]

4. The head kitchen-maid wishes to stay for two years, and improve herself under the man-cook, and having of course sucked the brains (as the phrase is) from under the chef's nightcap, then the head kitchen-maid wishes to go.

And upon my word, Mrs. Toddles, mum, I will go and fetch the cab for her. The cab? Why not her ladyship's own carriage and pair, and the head coachman to drive away the head kitchen-maid? You see she stipulates for everything—the time to come; the time to stay; the family she will be with; and as soon as she has improved herself enough, of course the upper kitchen-maid will step into the carriage and drive off.

Well, upon my word and conscience, if things are coming to *this* pass, Mrs. Toddles, and Mrs. Doddles, mum, I think I will go upstairs and get a basin and a sponge, and then downstairs and get some hot water; and then I will go and scrub that chalk-mark off my own door with my own hands.

It is wiped off, I declare! After ever so many weeks! Who has done it? It was just a little roundabout mark, you know, and it was there for days and weeks, before I ever thought it would be the text of a Roundabout Paper.

W. M. THACKERAY.

NIL NISI BONUM

ALMOST the last words which Sir Walter spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were, 'Be a good man, my dear!' and with the last flicker of *breath* on his dying lips, he sighed a farewell to his family and passed away blessing them.

Two men, famous, admired, beloved, have just left us, the Goldsmith and the Gibbon of our time.¹ Ere a few weeks are over, many a critic's pen will be at work, reviewing their lives, and passing judgment on their works. This is no review, or history, or criticism: only a word in testimony of respect and regard from a man of letters, who owes to his own professional labour the honour of becoming acquainted with these two eminent literary men. One was the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born almost with the republic; the *pater patriæ* had laid his hand on the child's head. He bore Washington's name: he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling goodwill. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman, who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also gratefully remembered? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thankful heart? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own? His

¹ Washington Irving (died November 28, 1859) and Lord Macaulay (died December 28, 1859).

NIL NISI BONUM

books are read by millions¹ of his countrymen, whom he has taught to love England, and why to love her. It would have been easy to speak otherwise than he did: to inflame national rancours, which, at the time when he first became known as a public writer, war had just renewed: to cry down the old civilization at the expense of the new: to point out our faults, arrogance, shortcomings, and give the republic to infer how much she was the parent state's superior. There are writers enough in the United States, honest and otherwise, who preach that kind of doctrine. But the good Irving, the peaceful, the friendly, had no place for bitterness in his heart, and no scheme but kindness. Received in England with extraordinary tenderness and friendship (Scott, Southey, Byron, a hundred others have borne witness to their liking for him), he was a messenger of goodwill and peace between his country and ours. 'See, friends!' he seems to say, 'these English are not so wicked, rapacious, callous, proud, as you have been taught to believe them. I went amongst them a humble man; won my way by my pen; and, when known, found every hand held out to me with kindness and welcome. Scott is a great man, you acknowledge. Did not Scott's king of England give a gold medal to him, and another to me, your countryman, and a stranger?'

Tradition in the United States still fondly retains the history of the feasts and rejoicings which awaited Irving on his return to his native country from Europe. He had a national welcome; he stammered in his speeches, hid himself in confusion, and the people loved him all the better. He had worthily represented America in Europe. In that young community a man who brings home with him abundant European testimonials is still treated with respect (I have found American writers of wide-world reputation, strangely solicitous about the opinions of quite obscure British critics, and elated or

¹ See his *Life*, in the most remarkable *Dictionary of Authors*, published lately at Philadelphia, by Mr. Alibone.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

depressed by their judgments); and Irving went home medalled by the king, diplomatised by the university, crowned, and honoured and admired. He had not in any way intrigued for his honours, he had fairly won them; and, in Irving's instance, as in others, the old country was glad and eager to pay them.

In America the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. Party wars are perpetually raging there, and are carried on by the press with a rancour and fierceness against individuals which exceed British, almost Irish, virulence. It seemed to me, during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hand from that harmless, friendly peacemaker. I had the good fortune to see him at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington,¹ and remarked how in every place he was honoured and welcome. Every large city has its Irving House. The country takes pride in the fame of its men of letters. The gate of his own charming little domain on the beautiful Hudson River was for ever swinging before visitors who came to him. He shut out no one.² I had seen many pictures of his house, and read descriptions of it, in both of which it was treated with a not unusual American exaggeration. It was but a pretty little cabin of a place; the gentleman of the press who took notes of the place, whilst his kind old host was

¹ At Washington, Mr. Irving came to a lecture given by the writer, which Mr. Filmore and General Pierce, the president and president-elect, were also kind enough to attend together. 'Two Kings of Brentford smelling at one rose,' says Irving, looking up with his good-humoured smile.

² Mr. Irving described to me, with that humour and good humour which he always kept, how, amongst other visitors, a member of the British press who had carried his distinguished pen to America (where he employed it in vilifying his own country) came to Sunnyside, introduced himself to Irving, partook of his wine and luncheon, and in two days described Mr. Irving, his house, his nieces, his meal, and his manner of dozing afterwards, in a New York paper. On another occasion, Irving said, laughing: 'Two persons came to me, and one held me in conversation whilst the other miscreant took my portrait!'

NIL NISI BONUM

sleeping, might have visited the whole house in a couple of minutes.

And how came it that this house was so small, when Mr. Irving's books were sold by hundreds of thousands, nay, millions, when his profits were known to be large, and the habits of life of the good old bachelor were notoriously modest and simple? He had loved once in his life. The lady he loved died; and he, whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after-life add to the pathos of that untold story? To grieve always was not in his nature; or, when he had his sorrow, to bring all the world in to condole with him and bemoan it. Deep and quiet he lays the love of his heart, and buries it; and grass and flowers grow over the scarred ground in due time.

Irving had such a small house and such narrow rooms, because there was a great number of people to occupy them. He could only afford to keep one old horse (which, lazy and aged as it was, managed once or twice to run away with that careless old horseman). He could only afford to give plain sherry to that amiable British paragraph-monger from New York, who saw the patriarch asleep over his modest, blameless cup, and fetched the public into his private chamber to look at him. Irving could only live very modestly, because the wifeless, childless man had a number of children to whom he was as a father. He had as many as nine nieces, I am told—I saw two of these ladies at his house—with all of whom the dear old man had shared the produce of his labour and genius.

'*Be a good man, my dear.*' One can't but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humoured, affectionate, self-denying: in

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable with the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language; the constant friend to us and our nation; to men of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life:—I don't know what sort of testimonial will be raised to him in his own country, where generous and enthusiastic acknowledgment of American merit is never wanting: but Irving was in our service as well as theirs; and as they have placed a stone at Greenwich yonder in memory of that gallant young Bellot, who shared the perils and fate of some of our Arctic seamen, I would like to hear of some memorial raised by English writers and friends of letters in affectionate remembrance of the dear and good Washington Irving.

As for the other writer, whose departure many friends, some few most dearly-loved relatives, and multitudes of admiring readers deplore, our republic has already decreed his statue, and he must have known that he had earned this posthumous honour. He is not a poet and a man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears, amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a great Englishman. All sorts of successes are easy to him: as a lad he goes down into the arena with others, and wins all the prizes to which he has a mind. A place in the senate is straightway offered to the young man. He takes his seat there; he speaks, when so minded, without party anger or intrigue, but not without party faith and a sort of heroic enthusiasm for his cause. Still

NIL NISI BONUM

he is a poet and philosopher even more than orator. That he may have leisure and means to pursue his darling studies, he absents himself for a while, and accepts a richly-remunerated post in the East. As learned a man may live in a cottage or a college common-room; but it always seemed to me that ample means and recognised rank were Macaulay's as of right. Years ago there was a wretched outcry raised because Mr. Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor Castle, where he was staying. Immortal gods! Was this man not a fit guest for any palace in the world? or a fit companion for any man or woman in it? I daresay, after Austerlitz, the old K. K. court officials and footmen sneered at Napoleon for dating from Schönbrunn. But that miserable 'Windsor Castle' outcry is an echo out of fast, retreating old-world remembrances. The place of such a natural chief was amongst the first of the land; and that country is best, according to our British notion, at least, where the man of eminence has the last chance of investing his genius and intellect.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-feet-six people might be angry at the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party: and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen? To remember the talk is to wonder: to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers, and what they had done in after-life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801-2-3-4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

It may be he was not ill-pleased that you should recognize it; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay, up to the day when the present lines are written (the 9th of January), the reader should not deny himself the pleasure of looking especially at two. It is a good sign of the times when such articles as these (I mean the articles in *The Times* and *Saturday Review*) appear in our public prints about our public men. They educate us, as it were, to admire rightly. An un-instructed person in a museum or at a concert may pass by without recognising a picture or a passage of music, which the connoisseur by his side may show him is a masterpiece of harmony, or a wonder of artistic skill. After reading these papers you like and respect more the person you have admired so much already. And so with regard to Macaulay's style there may be faults of course—what critic can't point them out? But for the nonce we are not talking about faults: we want to say *nil nisi bonum*. Well—take at hazard any three pages of the *Essays* or *History*; —and glimmering below the stream of the narrative, as it were, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Why is this epithet used? Whence is that simile drawn? How does he manage, in two or three words, to paint an individual, or to indicate a landscape? Your neighbour, who has *his* reading, and his little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful industry, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.

NIL NISI BONUM

Many Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library. I speak *à cœur ouvert*, and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon,—what not?—and have been struck by none of them so much as by that catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are housed. What peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked heaven for this my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I find there. Under the dome which held Macaulay's brain, and from which his solemn eyes looked out on the world but a fortnight since, what a vast, brilliant, and wonderful store of learning was ranged! what strange lore would he not fetch for you at your bidding! A volume of law, or history, a book of poetry familiar or forgotten (except by himself who forgot nothing), a novel ever so old, and he had it at hand. I spoke to him once about *Clarissa*. 'Not read *Clarissa*!' he cried out. 'If you have once thoroughly entered on *Clarissa*, and are infected by it, you can't leave it. When I was in India, I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the governor-general, and the secretary of government, and the commander-in-chief, and their wives. I had *Clarissa* with me: and, as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace! The governor's wife seized the book, and the secretary waited for it, and the chief-justice could not read it for tears!' He acted the whole scene: he paced up and down the Athenæum library: I daresay he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others!

In this little paper let us keep to the text of *nil nisi*

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

bonum. One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says 'he had no heart.' Why, a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself; and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned. He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he cheers heroic resistance; how he backs and applauds freedom struggling for its own; how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful; how he recognises genius, though selfish villains possess it! The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none: and two men more generous, and more loving, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history.

The writer who said that Lord Macaulay had no heart could not know him. Press writers should read a man well, and all over, and again; and hesitate, at least, before they speak of those *αἰδοῖα*. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender, and generous,¹ and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.

If any young man of letters reads this little sermon—and to him, indeed, it is addressed—I would say to him, 'Bear Scott's words in your mind, and "be good, my dear."' Here are two literary men gone to their account, and *laus Deo*, as far as we know, it is fair, and open, and clean. Here is no need of apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices which would have been virtues but for unavoidable, etc. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted: each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honoured by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give uncountable

¹ Since the above was written, I have been informed that it has been found, on examining Lord Macaulay's papers, that he was in the habit of giving away *more than a fourth part* of his annual income.

NIL NISI BONUM

happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an immense kindness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother scribe, to be endowed with such merit, or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid to *our service*. We may not win the baton or epaulettes; but God give us strength to guard the honour of the flag!

W. M. THACKERAY.

STEELE'S LETTERS

ON the 19th of May, 1708, Her Majesty Queen Anne being then upon the throne of Great Britain and Ireland, a coach with two horses, gaudy rather than neat in its appointments, drew up at the door of my Lord Sunderland's Office in Whitehall. It contained a lady about thirty, of considerable personal attractions, and dressed richly in cinnamon satin. She was a brunette, with a rather high forehead, the height of which was ingeniously broken by two short locks upon the temples. Moreover, she had distinctly fine eyes, and a mouth which, in its normal state, must have been arch and pretty, but was now drawn down at the corners under the influence of some temporary irritation. As the coach stopped, a provincial-looking servant promptly alighted, pulled out from the box-seat a large case of the kind used for preserving the voluminous periwigs of the period, and subsequently extracted from the same receptacle a pair of shining new shoes with square toes and silver buckles. These, with the case, he carried carefully into the house, returning shortly afterwards. Then ensued what, upon the stage, would be called 'an interval,' during which time the high forehead of the lady began to cloud visibly with impatience, and the corners of her mouth to grow more ominous. At length, about twenty minutes later, came a sound of laughter and noisy voices; and by-and-by bustled out of the Cockpit portal a square-shouldered, square-faced man in a rich dress, which, like the coach, was a little showy. He wore a huge black full-bottomed periwig. Speaking with a marked Irish accent, he made profuse apologies to the occupant of the carriage—apologies which, as might be expected, were not well received. An expression of vexation came over his good-tempered face as he took his seat at the lady's side, and he lapsed for a few

STEELE'S LETTERS

minutes into a moody silence. But before they had gone many yards, his dark, deep-set eyes began to twinkle once more as he looked about him. When they passed the Tilt-Yard, a detachment of the Second Troop of Life Guards, magnificent in their laced red coats, jack boots, and white feathers, came pacing out on their black horses. They took their way towards Charing Cross, and for a short distance followed the same route as the chariot. The lady was loftily indifferent to their presence; and she was, besides, on the farther side of the vehicle. But her companion manifestly recognized some old acquaintances among them, and was highly gratified at being recognized in his turn, although at the same time it was evident he was also a little apprehensive lest the 'Gentlemen of the Guard,' as they were called, should be needlessly demonstrative in their acknowledgment of his existence. After this, nothing more of moment occurred. Slowly mounting St. James's Street, the coach turned down Piccadilly, and, passing between the groups of lounging lackeys at the gate, entered Hyde Park. Here, by the time it had once made the circuit of the Ring, the lady's equanimity was completely restored, and the gentleman was radiant. He was, in truth, to use his own words, 'no undelightful Companion.' He possessed an infinite fund of wit and humour; and his manner to women had a sincerity of deference which was not the prevailing characteristic of his age.

There is but slender invention in this little picture. The gentleman was Captain Steele, late of the Life Guards, the Coldstreams, and Lucas's regiment of foot, now Gazetteer, and Gentleman Waiter to Queen Anne's consort, Prince George of Denmark, and not yet 'Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff' of the immortal 'Tatler.' The lady was Mrs. Steele, *née* Miss Mary Scurlock, his 'Ruler' and 'absolute Governess' (as he called her), to whom he had been married some eight months before. If you ask at the British Museum for the Steele manuscripts

AUSTIN DOBSON

(Add. MSS. 5,145, A, B, and C), the courteous attendant will bring you, with its faded ink, dusky paper, and hasty scrawl, the very letter making arrangements for this meeting ('best Periwigg' and 'new Shoes' included), at the end of which the writer assures his 'dear Prue', (another pet name) that she is 'Vital Life to Y^r Oblig^d Affectionate Husband & Humble Ser^{mt} Rich^d Steele.' There are many such in the *quarto* volume of which this forms part, written from all places, at all times, in all kinds of hands. They take all tones; they are passionate, tender, expostulatory, playful, dignified, lyric, didactic. It must be confessed that from a perusal of them one's feeling for the lady of the chariot is not entirely unsympathetic. It can scarcely have been an ideal household, that 'third door right hand turning out of Jermyn Street,' to which so many of them are addressed; and Mrs. Steele must frequently have had to complain to her *confidante*, Mrs. (or Miss) Binns (a lady whom Steele is obviously anxious to propitiate), of the extraordinary irregularity of her restless lord and master. Now a friend from Barbados has stopped him on his way home, and he will come (he writes) 'within a Pint of Wine;' now it is Lord Sunderland who is keeping him indefinitely at the Council; now the siege of Lille and the proofs of the 'Gazette' will detain him until ten at night. Sometimes his vague 'West Indian business' (that is, his first wife's property) hurries him suddenly into the City; sometimes he is borne off to the Gentlemen Ushers' table at St. James's. Sometimes, even, he stays out all night, as he had done not many days before the date of the above meeting, when he had written to beg that his dressing-gown, his slippers, and 'clean Linnen' might be sent to him at 'one Legg's,' a barber 'over against the Devill Tavern at Charing Crosse,' where he proposes to lie that night, chiefly, it has been conjectured from the context, in order to escape certain watchful 'shoulder-dabbers' who were hanging obstinately about his own mansion in St. James's. For—to

STEELE'S LETTERS

tell the truth—he was generally hopelessly embarrassed, and scarcely ever without a lawsuit on his hands. He was not a bad man; he was not necessarily vicious or dissolute. But his habits were incurably generous, profuse, and improvident; and his sanguine Irish nature led him continually to mistake his expectations for his income. Naturally, perhaps, his ‘absolute Governess’ complained of an absolutism so strangely limited. If her affection for him was scarcely as ardent as his passion for her, it was still a genuine emotion. But to a coquette of some years’ standing, and ‘a cried-up beauty’ (as Mrs. Manley calls her), the realities of her married life must have been a cruel disappointment; and she was not the woman to conceal it. ‘I wish,’ says her husband in one of his letters, ‘I knew how to Court you into Good Humour, for Two or Three Quarrells more will dispatch me quite.’ Of her replies we have no knowledge; but from scattered specimens of her style when angry, they must often have been exceptionally scornful and unconciliatory. On one occasion, where he addresses her as ‘Madam,’ and returns her note to her in order that she may see, upon second thoughts, the disrespectful manner in which she treats him, he is evidently deeply wounded. She has said that their dispute is far from being a trouble to her, and he rejoins that to him any disturbance between them is the greatest affliction imaginable. And then he goes on to expostulate, with more dignity than usual, against her unreasonable use of her prerogative. ‘I Love you,’ he says, ‘better than the light of my Eyes, or the life-blood in my Heart but when I have lett you know that, you are also to understand that neither my sight shall be so far enchanted, or my affection so much master of me as to make me forgett our common Interest. To attend my businesse as I ought and improve my fortune it is necessary that my time and my Will should be under no direction but my own.’ Clearly his bosom’s queen had been inquiring too closely into his goings and comings.

AUSTIN DOBSON

It is a strange thing, he says, in another letter, that, because she is handsome, he must be always giving her an account of every trifle, and minute of his time. And again—‘ Dear Prue, do not send after me, for I shall be ridiculous!’ It had happened to him, no doubt. ‘ He is governed by his wife most abominably, as bad as Marlborough,’ says another contemporary letter-writer. And we may fancy the blue eyes of Dr. Swift flashing unutterable scorn as he scribbles off this piece of intelligence to Stella and Mrs. Dingley.

In the letters which follow Steele’s above-quoted expostulation, the embers of misunderstanding flame and fade, to flame and fade again. A word or two of kindness makes him rapturous; a harsh expression sinks him to despair. As time goes on, the letters grow fewer, and the writers grow more used to each other’s ways. But to the last Steele’s affectionate nature takes fire upon the least encouragement. Once, years afterwards, when Prue is in the country and he is in London, and she calls him ‘ Good Dick,’ it throws him into such a transport that he declares he could forget his gout, and walk down to her at Wales. ‘ My dear little peevish, beautiful, wise Governess, God bless you,’ the letter ends. In another he assures her that, lying in her place and on her pillow, he fell into tears from thinking that his ‘ charming little insolent might be then awake and in pain ’ with headache. She wants flattery, she says, and he flatters her. ‘ Her son,’ he declares, ‘ is extremely pretty, and has his face sweetened with something of the Venus his mother, which is no small delight to the Vulcan who begot him.’ He assures her that, though she talks of the children, they are dear to him more because they are hers than because they are his own. And this reminds us that some of the best of his later letters are about his family. Once, at this time of their mother’s absence in Wales, he says that he has invited his eldest daughter to dinner with one of her teachers, because she had represented to him ‘ in her pretty language that she

STEELE'S LETTERS

seemed helpless and friendless, without anybody's taking notice of her at Christmas, when all the children but she and two more were with their relations.' So now they are in the room where he is writing. 'I told Betty,' he adds, 'I had writ to you; and she made me open the letter again, and give her humble duty to her mother, and desire to know when she shall have the honour to see her in town.' No doubt this was in strict accordance with the proprieties as practised at Mrs. Nazereau's polite academy in Chelsea; but somehow one suspects that 'Madam Betty' would scarcely have addressed the writer of the letter with the same boarding-school formality. Elsewhere the talk is all of Eugene, the eldest boy. 'Your son, at the present writing, is mighty well employed in tumbling on the floor of the room and sweeping the sand with a feather. He grows a most delightful child, and very full of play and spirit. He is also a very great scholar: he can read his Primer; and I have brought down my Virgil. He makes most shrewd remarks upon the pictures. We are very intimate friends and play-fellows.' Yes: decidedly Steele's children must have loved their clever, faulty, kindly father.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

‘BOSWELL: We grow weary when idle.’

‘JOHNSON: That is, sir, because others being busy, we want company; but if we were idle, there would be no growing weary; we should all entertain one another.’

JUST now, when every one is bound, under pain of a decree in absence convicting them of *lèse-respectability*, to enter on some lucrative profession, and labour therein with something not far short of enthusiasm, a cry from the opposite party who are content when they have enough, and like to look on and enjoy in the meanwhile, savours a little of bravado and gasconade. And yet this should not be. Idleness so called, which does not consist in doing nothing, but in doing a great deal not recognised in the dogmatic formularies of the ruling class, has as good a right to state its position as industry itself. It is admitted that the presence of people who refuse to enter in the great handicap race for sixpenny pieces is at once an insult and a disenchantment for those who do. A fine fellow (as we see so many) takes his determination, votes for the sixpences, and in the emphatic Americanism, ‘goes for’ them. And while such an one is ploughing distressfully up the road, it is not hard to understand his resentment when he perceives cool persons in the meadows by the wayside, lying with a handkerchief over their ears and a glass at their elbow. Alexander is touched in a very delicate place by the disregard of Diogenes. Where was the glory of having taken Rome for those tumultuous barbarians, who poured into the Senate house, and found the Fathers sitting silent and unmoved by their success? It is a sore thing to have laboured along and scaled the arduous hilltops, and when all is done, find humanity indifferent to your achievement. Hence physicists condemn the unphysical; financiers have only a superficial toleration for those who know little of stocks; literary persons despise the

APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

unlettered; and people of all pursuits combine to disparage those who have none.

But though this is one difficulty of the subject, it is not the greatest. You could not be put in prison for speaking against industry, but you can be sent to Coventry for speaking like a fool. The greatest difficulty with most subjects is to do them well; therefore, please to remember this is an apology. It is certain that much may be judiciously argued in favour of diligence; only there is something to be said against it, and that is what, on the present occasion, I have to say. To state one argument is not necessarily to be deaf to all others, and that a man has written a book of travels in Montenegro is no reason why he should never have been to Richmond.

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay may escape from school honours with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterwards have a shot in their locker, and begin the world bankrupt. And the same holds true during all the time a lad is educating himself, or suffering others to educate him. It must have been a very foolish old gentleman who addressed Johnson at Oxford in these words: 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.' The old gentleman seems to have been unaware that many other things besides reading grow irksome, and not a few become impossible, by the time a man has to use spectacles and cannot walk without a stick. Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. It seems a pity to sit, like the Lady of Shalott, peering into a mirror, with your back turned on all the bustle and glamour of reality. And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thought.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truantry that you regret; you would rather cancel some lacklustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. This is not the moment to dilate on that mighty place of education, which was the favourite school of Dickens and of Balzac, and turns out yearly many inglorious masters in the Science of the Aspects of Life. Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for, if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn, and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket, and there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is? We may conceive Mr. Worldly Wiseman accosting such an one, and the conversation that should thereupon ensue:—

‘How now, young fellow, what dost thou here?’

‘Truly, sir, I take mine ease.’

‘Is not this the hour of the class? and shouldst thou not be plying thy Book with diligence, to the end thou mayest obtain knowledge?’

‘Nay, but thus also I follow after Learning, by your leave.’

‘Learning, quotha! After what fashion, I pray thee? Is it mathematics?’

‘No, to be sure.’

‘Is it metaphysics?’

APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

‘Not that.’

‘Is it some language?’

‘Nay, it is no language.’

‘Is it a trade?’

‘Nor a trade neither.’

‘Why, then, what is’t?’

‘Indeed, sir, as a time may soon come for me to go upon Pilgrimage, I am desirous to note what is commonly done by persons in my case, and where are the ugliest Sloughs and Thickets on the Road; as also, what manner of Staff is of the best service. Moreover, I lie here, by this water, to learn, by root-of-heart, a lesson which my master teaches me to call Peace, or Contentment.’

Hereupon Mr. Worldly Wiseman was much commoved with passion, and shaking his cane with a very threatful countenance, broke forth upon this wise: ‘Learning, quotha!’ said he; ‘I would have all such rogues scourged by the Hangman!’

And so he would go on his way, ruffling out his cravat with a crackle of starch, like a turkey when it spreads its feathers.

Now this, of Mr. Wiseman’s, is the common opinion. A fact is not called a fact, but a piece of gossip, if it does not fall into one of your scholastic categories. An inquiry must be in some acknowledged direction, with a name to go by; or else you are not inquiring at all, only lounging; and the workhouse is too good for you. It is supposed that all knowledge is at the bottom of a well, or the far end of a telescope. Sainte-Beuve, as he grew older, came to regard all experience as a single great book, in which to study for a few years ere we go hence; and it seemed all one to him whether you should read in Chapter xx., which is the differential calculus, or in Chapter xxxix., which is hearing the band play in the gardens. As a matter of fact, an intelligent person, looking out of his eyes and hearkening in his ears, with a smile on his face all the time, will get more true

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

education than many another in a life of heroic vigils. There is certainly some chill and arid knowledge to be found upon the summits of formal and laborious science; but it is all round about you, and for the trouble of looking, that you will acquire the warm and palpitating facts of life. While others are filling their memory with a lumber of words, one-half of which they will forget before the week is out, your truant may learn some really useful art: to play the fiddle, to know a good cigar, or to speak with ease and opportunity to all varieties of men. Many who have 'plied their book diligently,' and know all about some one branch or another of accepted lore, come out of the study with an ancient and owl-like demeanour, and prove dry, stockish, and dyspeptic in all the better and brighter parts of life. Many make a large fortune, who remain under-bred and pathetically stupid to the last. And meantime there goes the idler, who began life along with them—by your leave, a different picture. He has had time to take care of his health and his spirits; he has been a great deal in the open air, which is the most salutary of all things for both body and mind; and if he has never read the great Book in very recondite places, he has dipped into it and skimmed it over to excellent purpose. Might not the student afford some Hebrew roots, and the business man some of his half-crowns, for a share of the idler's knowledge of life at large, and Art of Living? Nay, and the idler has another and more important quality than these. I mean his wisdom. He who has much looked on at the childish satisfaction of other people in their hobbies, will regard his own with only a very ironical indulgence. He will not be heard among the dogmatists. He will have a great and cool allowance for all sorts of people and opinions. If he finds no out-of-the-way truths, he will identify himself with no very burning falsehood. His way takes him along a by-road, not much frequented, but very even and pleasant, which is called Commonplace Lane, and leads to the Belvedere of

APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

Common-sense. Thence he shall command an agreeable, if no very noble prospect; and while others behold the East and West, the Devil and the Sunrise, he will be contentedly aware of a sort of morning hour upon all sublunary things, with an army of shadows running speedily and in many different directions into the great daylight of Eternity. The shadows and the generations, the shrill doctors and the plangent wars, go by into ultimate silence and emptiness; but underneath all this, a man may see, out of the Belvedere windows, much green and peaceful landscape; many fire-lit parlours; good people laughing, drinking, and making love as they did before the Flood or the French Revolution; and the old shepherd telling his tale under the hawthorn.

Extreme *busyness*, whether at school or college, kirk or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk; they *cannot* be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralysed or alienated; and yet very

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuff-box empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway-carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre, not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who

APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? Colonel Newcome helped to lose his friend's money; Fred Bayham had an ugly trick of borrowing shirts; and yet they were better people to fall among than Mr. Barnes. And though Falstaff was neither sober nor very honest, I think I could name one or two long-faced Barabbases whom the world could better have done without. Hazlitt mentions that he was more sensible of obligation to Northcote, who had never done him anything he could call a service, than to his whole circle of ostentatious friends; for he thought a good companion emphatically the greatest benefactor. I know there are people in the world who cannot feel grateful unless the favour has been done them at the cost of pain and difficulty. But this is a churlish disposition. A man may send you six sheets of letter-paper covered with the most entertaining gossip, or you may pass half-an-hour pleasantly, perhaps profitably, over an article of his; do you think the service would be greater, if he had made the manuscript in his heart's blood, like a compact with the devil? Do you really fancy you should be more beholden to your correspondent, if he had been damning you all the while for your importunity? Pleasures are more beneficial than duties because, like the quality of mercy, they are not strained, and they are twice blest. There must always be two to a kiss, and there may be a score in a jest; but wherever there is an element of sacrifice, the favour is conferred with pain, and, among generous people, received with confusion. There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or, when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

he set every one he passed into a good humour; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: 'You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased.' If he had looked pleased before, he had now to look both pleased and mystified. For my part, I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than tearful children; I do not wish to pay for tears anywhere but upon the stage; but I am prepared to deal largely in the opposite commodity. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the forty-seventh proposition; they do a better thing than that, they practically demonstrate the great Theorem of the Liveableness of Life. Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and, within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return. Either he absents himself entirely from all fellowship, and lives a recluse in a garret, with carpet slippers and a leaden inkpot; or he comes among people swiftly and bitterly, in a contraction of his whole nervous system, to discharge some temper before he returns to work. I do not care how much or how well he works, this fellow is an evil feature in other people's lives. They would be happier if he were dead. They could easier do without his services in the Circumlocution Office, than they can tolerate his fractious spirits. He poisons life at the well-head. It is better to be beggared out of hand by a scape-grace nephew, than daily hag-ridden by a peevish uncle.

APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

And what, in God's name, is all this pother about? For what cause do they embitter their own and other people's lives? That a man should publish three or thirty articles a year, that he should finish or not finish his great allegorical picture, are questions of little interest to the world. The ranks of life are full; and although a thousand fall, there are always some to go into the breach. When they told Joan of Arc she should be at home minding women's work, she answered there were plenty to spin and wash. And so, even with your own rare gifts! When nature is 'so careless of the single life,' why should we coddle ourselves into the fancy that our own is of exceptional importance? Suppose Shakespeare had been knocked on the head some dark night in Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves, the world would have wagged on better or worse, the pitcher gone to the well, the scythe to the corn, and the student to his book; and no one been any the wiser of the loss. There are not many works extant, if you look the alternative all over, which are worth the price of a pound of tobacco to a man of limited means. This is a sobering reflection for the proudest of our earthly vanities. Even a tobacconist may, upon consideration, find no great cause for personal vainglory in the phrase; for although tobacco is an admirable sedative, the qualities necessary for retailing it are neither rare nor precious in themselves. Alas and alas! you may take it how you will, but the services of no single individual are indispensable. Atlas was just a gentleman with a protracted nightmare! And yet you see merchants who go and labour themselves into a great fortune and thence into the bankruptcy court; scribblers who keep scribbling at little articles until their temper is a cross to all who come about them, as though Pharaoh should set the Israelites to make a pin instead of a pyramid; and fine young men who work themselves into a decline, and are driven off in a hearse with white plumes upon it. Would you not suppose these persons had been whispered, by the

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Master of the Ceremonies, the promise of some momentous destiny? and that this lukewarm bullet on which they play their farces was the bull's-eye and centre-point of all the universe? And yet it is not so. The ends for which they give away their priceless youth, for all they know, may be chimerical or hurtful; the glory and riches they expect may never come, or may find them indifferent; and they and the world they inhabit are so inconsiderable that the mind freezes at the thought.

R. L. STEVENSON.

WALKING TOURS

IT must not be imagined that a walking tour, as some would have us fancy, is merely a better or worse way of seeing the country. There are many ways of seeing landscape quite as good; and none more vivid, in spite of canting dilettantes, than from a railway train. But landscape on a walking tour is quite accessory. He who is indeed of the brotherhood does not voyage in quest of the picturesque, but of certain jolly humours—of the hope and spirit with which the march begins at morning, and the peace and spiritual repletion of the evening's rest. He cannot tell whether he puts his knapsack on, or takes it off, with more delight. The excitement of the departure puts him in key for that of the arrival. Whatever he does is not only a reward in itself, but will be further rewarded in the sequel; and so pleasure leads on to pleasure in an endless chain. It is this that so few can understand; they will either be always lounging or always at five miles an hour; they do not play off the one against the other, prepare all day for the evening, and all evening for the next day. And, above all, it is here that your overwalker fails of comprehension. His heart rises against those who drink their curaçoa in liqueur-glasses, when he himself can swill it in a brown John. He will not believe that the flavour is more delicate in the smaller dose. He will not believe that to walk this unconscionable distance is merely to stupefy and brutalise himself, and come to his inn, at night, with a sort of frost on his five wits, and a starless night of darkness in his spirit. Not for him the mild luminous evening of the temperate walker! He has nothing left of man but a physical need for bedtime and a double nightcap; and even his pipe, if he be a smoker, will be savourless and disenchanting. It is the fate of such an one to take twice as much trouble as is needed to obtain

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

happiness, and miss the happiness in the end; he is the man of the proverb, in short, who goes farther and fares worse.

Now, to be properly enjoyed, a walking tour should be gone upon alone. If you go in a company, or even in pairs, it is no longer a walking tour in anything but name; it is something else, and more in the nature of a picnic. A walking tour should be gone upon alone, because freedom is of the essence; because you should be able to stop and go on, and follow this way or that, as the freak takes you; and because you must have your own pace, and neither trot alongside a champion walker, nor mince in time with a girl. And then you must be open to all impressions, and let your thoughts take colour from what you see. You should be as a pipe for any wind to play upon. 'I cannot see the wit,' says Hazlitt, 'of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country I wish to vegetate like the country,'—which is the gist of all that can be said upon the matter. There should be no cackle of voices at your elbow, to jar on the meditative silence of the morning. And so long as a man is reasoning he cannot surrender himself to that fine intoxication that comes of much motion in the open air, that begins in a sort of a dazzle and sluggishness of the brain, and ends in a peace that passes comprehension.

During the first day or so of any tour there are moments of bitterness, when the traveller feels more than coldly towards his knapsack, when he is half in a mind to throw it bodily over the hedge, and, like Christian on a similar occasion, 'give three leaps and go on singing.' And yet it soon acquires a property of easiness. It becomes magnetic; the spirit of the journey enters into it. And no sooner have you passed the straps over your shoulder than the lees of sleep are cleared from you, you pull yourself together with a shake, and fall at once into your stride. And surely, of all possible moods, this, in which a man takes the road, is the best.

WALKING TOURS

Of course, if he *will* keep thinking of his anxieties, if he *will* open the merchant Abudah's chest and walk arm-in-arm with the hag—why, wherever he is, and whether he walk fast or slow, the chances are that he will not be happy. And so much the more shame to himself! There are perhaps thirty men setting forth at that same hour, and I would lay a large wager there is not another dull face among the thirty. It would be a fine thing to follow, in a coat of darkness, one after another of these wayfarers, some summer morning, for the first few miles upon the road. This one, who walks fast, with a keen look in his eyes, is all concentrated in his own mind; he is up at his loom, weaving and weaving, to set the landscape to words. This one peers about, as he goes, among the grasses; he waits by the canal to watch the dragon-flies; he leans on the gate of the pasture, and cannot look enough upon the complacent kine. And here comes another, talking, laughing, and gesticulating to himself. His face changes from time to time, as indignation flashes from his eyes or anger clouds his forehead. He is composing articles, delivering orations, and conducting the most impassioned interviews, by the way. A little farther on, and it is as like as not he will begin to sing. And well for him, supposing him to be no great master in that art, if he stumble across no stolid peasant at a corner; for on such an occasion, I scarcely know which is the more troubled, or whether it is worse to suffer the confusion of your troubadour, or the unfeigned alarm of your clown. A sedentary population, accustomed, besides, to the strange mechanical bearing of the common tramp can in no wise explain to itself the gaiety of these passers-by. I knew one man who was arrested as a runaway lunatic, because, although a full-grown person with a red beard, he skipped as he went like a child. And you would be astonished if I were to tell you all the grave and learned heads who have confessed to me that, when on walking tours, they sang—and sang very ill—and had a pair of red ears when, as described

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

above, the inauspicious peasant plumped into their arms from round a corner. And here, lest you should think I am exaggerating, is Hazlitt's own confession, from his essay 'On Going a Journey,' which is so good that there should be a tax levied on all who have not read it:—

'Give me the clear blue sky over my head,' says he, 'and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy.'

Bravo! After that adventure of my friend with the policeman, you would not have cared, would you, to publish that in the first person? But we have no bravery nowadays, and, even in books, must all pretend to be as dull and foolish as our neighbours. It was not so with Hazlitt. And notice how learned he is (as, indeed, throughout the essay) in the theory of walking tours. He is none of your athletic men in purple stockings, who walk their fifty miles a day: three hours' march is his ideal. And then he must have a winding road, the epicure.

Yet there is one thing I object to in these words of his, one thing in the great master's practice that seems to me not wholly wise. I do not approve of that leaping and running. Both of these hurry the respiration; they both shake up the brain out of its glorious open-air confusion; and they both break the pace. Uneven walking is not so agreeable to the body, and it distracts and irritates the mind. Whereas, when once you have fallen into an equable stride, it requires no conscious thought from you to keep it up, and yet it prevents you from thinking earnestly of anything else. Like knitting, like the work of a copying clerk, it gradually neutralises and sets to sleep the serious activity of the mind. We can think of this or that, lightly and laughingly, as a child thinks, or as we think in a morning doze; we can make puns or puzzle out acrostics, and trifle in a

WALKING TOURS

thousand ways with words and rhymes; but when it comes to honest work, when we come to gather ourselves together for an effort, we may sound the trumpet as loud and long as we please; the great barons of the mind will not rally to the standard, but sit, each one, at home, warming his hands over his own fire, and brooding on his own private thought!

In the course of a day's walk, you see, there is much variance in the mood. From the exhilaration of the start, to the happy phlegm of the arrival, the change is certainly great. As the day goes on, the traveller moves from the one extreme end towards the other. He becomes more and more incorporated with the material landscape, and the open-air drunkenness grows upon him with great strides, until he posts along the road, and sees everything about him, as in a cheerful dream. The first is certainly brighter, but the second stage is the more peaceful. A man does not make so many articles towards the end, nor does he laugh aloud; but the purely animal pleasures, the sense of physical wellbeing, the delight of every inhalation, of every time the muscles tighten down the thigh, console him for the absence of the others, and bring him to his destination still content.

Nor must I forget to say a word on bivouacs. You come to a milestone on a hill, or some place where deep ways meet under trees; and off goes the knapsack, and down you sit to smoke a pipe in the shade. You sink into yourself, and the birds come round and look at you; and your smoke dissipates upon the afternoon under the blue dome of heaven; and the sun lies warm upon your feet, and the cool air visits your neck and turns aside your open shirt. If you are not happy, you must have an evil conscience. You may dally as long as you like by the roadside. It is almost as if the millennium were arrived, when we shall throw our clocks and watches over the housetop, and remember time and seasons no more. Not to keep hours for a lifetime is, I was going to say, to live for ever. You have no idea,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

unless you have tried it, how endlessly long is a summer's day that you measure out only by hunger, and bring to an end only when you are drowsy. I know a village where there are hardly any clocks, where no one knows more of the days of the week than by a sort of instinct for the fête on Sundays, and where only one person can tell you the day of the month, and she is generally wrong; and if people were aware how slow Time journeyed in that village, and what armfuls of spare hours he gives, over and above the bargain, to its wise inhabitants, I believe there would be a stampede out of London, Liverpool, Paris, and a variety of large towns, where the clocks lose their heads, and shake the hours out each one faster than the other, as though they were all in a wager. And all these foolish pilgrims would each bring his own misery along with him, in a watch-pocket! It is to be noticed there were no clocks and watches in the much-vaunted days before the flood. It follows, of course, there were no appointments, and punctuality was not yet thought upon. 'Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure,' says Milton, 'he has yet one jewel left; ye cannot deprive him of his covetousness.' And so I would say of a modern man of business, you may do what you will for him, put him in Eden, give him the elixir of life—he has still a flaw at heart, he still has his business habits. Now, there is no time when business habits are more mitigated than on a walking tour. And so during these halts, as I say, you will feel almost free.

But it is at night, and after dinner, that the best hour comes. There are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered, it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine. If you wind up the evening with grog, you will own there was never such grog; at every sip a jocund tranquillity spreads about your limbs, and sits easily in your heart. If you read a book—and you will never do so save by fits and starts—you find the

WALKING TOURS

language strangely racy and harmonious; words take a new meaning; single sentences possess the ear for half-an-hour together; and the writer endears himself to you, at every page, by the nicest coincidence of sentiment. It seems as if it were a book you had written yourself in a dream. To all we have read on such occasions we look back with special favour. 'It was on the 10th of April, 1798,' says Hazlitt, with amorous precision, 'that I sat down to a volume of the new *'Héloïse,'* at the Inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken.' I should wish to quote more, for though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays, we cannot write like Hazlitt. And, talking of that, a volume of Hazlitt's essays would be a capital pocket-book on such a journey; so would a volume of Heine's songs; and for *'Tristram Shandy'* I can pledge a fair experience.

If the evening be fine and warm, there is nothing better in life than to lounge before the inn door in the sunset, or lean over the parapet of the bridge, to watch the weeds and the quick fishes. It is then, if ever, that you taste Joviality to the full significance of that audacious word. Your muscles are so agreeably slack, you feel so clean and so strong and so idle, that whether you move or sit still, whatever you do is done with pride and a kingly sort of pleasure. You fall in talk with any one, wise or foolish, drunk or sober. And it seems as if a hot walk purged you, more than of anything else, of all narrowness and pride, and left curiosity to play its part freely, as in a child or a man of science. You lay aside all your own hobbies, to watch provincial humours develop themselves before you, now as a laughable farce, and now grave and beautiful like an old tale.

Or perhaps you are left to your own company for the night, and surly weather imprisons you by the fire. You may remember how Burns, numbering past pleasures, dwells upon the hours when he has been 'happy thinking.' It is a phrase that may well perplex a poor modern, girt about on every side by clocks and chimes, and

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

haunted, even at night, by flaming dial-plates. For we are all so busy, and have so many far-off projects to realise, and castles in the fire to turn into solid habitable mansions on a gravel soil, that we can find no time for pleasure trips into the Land of Thought, and among the Hills of Vanity. Changed times, indeed, when we must sit all night, beside the fire, with folded hands; and a changed world for most of us, when we find we can pass the hours without discontent, and be happy thinking. We are in such haste to be doing, to be writing, to be gathering gear, to make our voice audible a moment in the derisive silence of eternity, that we forget that one thing, of which these are but the parts—namely, to live. We fall in love, we drink hard, we run to and fro upon the earth like frightened sheep. And now you are to ask yourself if, when all is done, you would not have been better to sit by the fire at home, and be happy thinking. To sit still and contemplate,—to remember the faces of women without desire, to be pleased by the great deeds of men without envy, to be everything and everywhere in sympathy, and yet content to remain where and what you are—is not this to know both wisdom and virtue, and to dwell with happiness? After all, it is not they who carry flags, but they who look upon it from a private chamber, who have the fun of the procession. And once you are at that, you are in the very humour of all social heresy. It is no time for shuffling, or for big, empty words. If you ask yourself what you mean by fame, riches, or learning, the answer is far to seek; and you go back into that kingdom of light imaginations, which seem so vain in the eyes of Philistines perspiring after wealth, and so momentous to those who are stricken with the disproportions of the world, and, in the face of the gigantic stars, cannot stop to split differences between two degrees of the infinitesimally small, such as a tobacco-pipe or the Roman Empire, a million of money or a fiddlestick's end.

You lean from the window, your last pipe reeking

WALKING TOURS

whitely into the darkness, your body full of delicious pains, your mind enthroned in the seventh circle of content; when suddenly the mood changes, the weathercock goes about, and you ask yourself one question more: whether, for the interval, you have been the wisest philosopher or the most egregious of donkeys? Human experience is not yet able to reply; but at least you have had a fine moment, and looked down upon all the kingdoms of the earth. And whether it was wise or foolish, to-morrow's travel will carry you, body and mind, into some different parish of the infinite.

R. L. STEVENSON.

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

THOSE who try to be artists use, time after time, the matter of their recollections, setting and resetting little coloured memories of men and scenes, rigging up (it may be) some especial friend in the attire of a buccaneer, and decreeing armies to manœuvre, or murder to be done, on the playground of their youth. But the memories are a fairy gift which cannot be worn out in using. After a dozen services in various tales, the little sun-bright pictures of the past still shine in the mind's eye with not a lineament defaced, not a tint impaired. *Glück und Unglück wird Gesang*, if Goethe pleases; yet only by endless avatars, the original re-embodiment after each. So that a writer, in time, begins to wonder at the perdurable life of these impressions; begins, perhaps, to fancy that he wrongs them when he weaves them in with fiction; and looking back on them with ever-growing kindness, puts them at last, substantive jewels, in a setting of their own.

One or two of these pleasant spectres I think I have laid. I used one but the other day: a little eyot of dense, freshwater sand, where I once waded deep in butterburrs, delighting to hear the song of the river on both sides, and to tell myself that I was indeed and at last upon an island. Two of my puppets lay there a summer's day, hearkening to the shearers at work in riverside fields and to the drums of the grey old garrison upon the neighbouring hill. And this was, I think, done rightly: the place was rightly peopled—and now belongs not to me but to my puppets—for a time at least. In time, perhaps, the puppets will grow faint; the original memory swim up instant as ever; and I shall once more lie in bed, and see the little sandy isle in Allan Water as it is in nature, and the child (that once was me) wading there in butterburrs; and wonder at the instance

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

and virgin freshness of that memory; and be pricked again, in season and out of season, by the desire to weave it into art.

There is another isle in my collection, the memory of which besieges me. I put a whole family there, in one of my tales; and later on, threw upon its shores, and condemned to several days of rain and shellfish on its tumbled boulders, the hero of another. The ink is not yet faded; the sound of the sentences is still in my mind's ear; and I am under a spell to write of that island again.

I

The little isle of Earraid lies close in to the southwest corner of the Ross of Mull: the sound of Iona on one side, across which you may see the isle and church of Columba; the open sea to the other, where you shall be able to mark on a clear surfy day the breakers running white on many sunken rocks. I first saw it, or first remember seeing it, framed in the round bull's eye of a cabin port, the sea lying smooth along its shores like the waters of a lake, the colourless, clear light of the early morning making plain its heathery and rocky hummocks. There stood upon it, in those days, a single rude house of uncemented stones, approached by a pier of wreckwood. It must have been very early, for it was then summer, and in summer, in that latitude, day scarcely withdraws; but even at that hour the house was making a sweet smoke of peats which came to me over the bay, and the bare-legged daughters of the cotter were wading by the pier. The same day we visited the shores of the isle in the ship's boats; rowed deep into Fiddler's Hole, sounding as we went; and, having taken stock of all possible accommodation, pitched on the northern inlet as the scene of operations. For it was no accident that had brought the lighthouse steamer to anchor in the Bay of Earraid. Fifteen miles away to seaward, a certain black rock stood environed

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

by the Atlantic rollers, the outpost of the Torran reefs. Here was a tower to be built, and a star lighted, for the conduct of seamen. But as the rock was small, and hard of access, and far from land, the work would be one of years; and my father was now looking for a shore station, where the stones might be quarried and dressed, the men live, and the tender, with some degree of safety, lie at anchor.

I saw Earraid next from the stern-thwart of an Iona lugger, Sam Bough and I sitting there cheek by jowl, with our feet upon our baggage, in a beautiful, clear, northern summer eve. And behold! there was now a pier of stone, there were rows of sheds, railways, travelling-cranes, a street of cottages, an iron house for the resident engineer, wooden bothies for the men, a stage where the courses of the tower were put together experimentally, and behind the settlement a great gash in the hillside where granite was quarried. In the bay, the steamer lay at her moorings. All day long there hung about the place the music of chinking tools: and even in the dead of night, the watchman carried his lantern to and fro, in the dark settlement, and could light the pipe of any midnight muser. It was, above all, strange to see Earraid on the Sunday, when the sound of the tools ceased and there fell a crystal quiet. All about the green compound men would be sauntering in their Sunday's best, walking with those lax joints of the reposing toiler, thoughtfully smoking, talking small, as if in honour of the stillness, or hearkening to the wailing of the gulls. And it was strange to see our Sabbath services, held, as they were, in one of the bothies, with Mr. Brebner reading at a table, and the congregation perched about in the double tier of sleeping-bunks; and to hear the singing of the psalms, 'the chapters,' the inevitable Spurgeon's sermon, and the old, eloquent lighthouse prayer.

In fine weather, when by the spy-glass on the hill the sea was observed to run low upon the reef, there

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

would be a sound of preparation in the very early morning; and before the sun had risen from behind Ben More, the tender would steam out of the bay. Over fifteen sea-miles of the great blue Atlantic rollers she ploughed her way, trailing at her tail a brace of wallowing stone-lighters. The open ocean widened upon either board, and the hills of the mainland began to go down on the horizon, before she came to her unhomely destination, and lay-to at last where the rock clapped its black head above the swell, with the tall iron barrack on its spider legs, and the truncated tower, and the cranes waving their arms, and the smoke of the engine-fire rising in the mid-sea. An ugly reef is this of the Dhu Heartach; no pleasant assemblage of shelves, and pools, and creeks, about which a child might play for a whole summer without weariness, like the Bell Rock or the Skerryvore, but one oval nodule of black-trap, sparsely bedabbled with an inconspicuous fucus, and alive in every crevice with a dingy insect between a slater and a bug. No other life was there but that of sea-birds, and of the sea itself, that here ran like a mill-race, and growled about the outer reef for ever, and ever and again, in the calmest weather, roared and spouted on the rock itself. Times were different upon Dhu Heartach when it blew, and the night fell dark, and the neighbour lights of Skerryvore and Rhu-val were quenched in fog, and the men sat prisoned high up in their iron drum, that then resounded with the lashing of the sprays. Fear sat with them in their sea-beleaguered dwelling; and the colour changed in anxious faces when some greater billow struck the barrack, and its pillars quivered and sprang under the blow. It was then that the foreman builder, Mr. Goodwillie, whom I see before me still in his rock-habit of undecipherable rags, would get his fiddle down and strike up human minstrelsy amid the music of the storm. But it was in sunshine only that I saw Dhu Heartach; and it was in sunshine, or the yet lovelier summer afterglow, that the steamer would return to

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Earraid, ploughing an enchanted sea the obedient lighters, relieved of their deck cargo, riding in her wake more quietly; and the steersman upon each, as she rose on the long swell, standing tall and dark against the shining west.

But it was in Earraid itself that I delighted chiefly. The lighthouse setlement scarce encroached beyond its fences; over the top of the first brae the ground was all virgin, the world all shut out, the face of things unchanged by any of man's doings. Here was no living presence, save the limpets on the rocks, or some old, grey, rain-beaten ram that I might rouse out of a ferny den betwixt two boulders, or for the haunting and the piping of the gulls. It was older than man; it was found so by incoming Celts, and seafaring Norsemen, and Columba's priests. The earthy savour of the bog plants, the rude disorder of the boulders, the inimitable seaside brightness of the air, the brine and the iodine, the lap of the billows among the weedy reefs, the sudden springing up of a great run of dashing surf along the sea-front of the isle,—all that I saw and felt my predecessors must have seen and felt with scarce a difference. I steeped myself in open air and in past ages.

'Delightful would it be to me to be in *Uchd Ailium*
On the pinnacle of a rock,
That I might often see
The face of the ocean;
That I might hear the song of the wonderful birds,
Source of happiness;
That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves
Upon the rocks:
At times at work without compulsion—
This would be delightful;
At times plucking dulse from the rocks;
At times at fishing.'

So, about the next island of Iona, sang Columba himself twelve hundred years before. And so might I have sung of Earraid.

And all the while I was aware that this life of sea-

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

bathing and sun-burning was for me but a holiday. In that year cannon were roaring for days together on French battlefields; and I would sit in my isle (I call it mine, after the use of lovers) and think upon the war, and the loudness of these far-away battles, and the pain of the men's wounds, and the weariness of their marching. And I would think too of that other war which is as old as mankind, and is indeed the life of man: the unsparing war, the grinding slavery of competition; the toil of seventy years, dear-bought bread, precarious honour, the perils and pitfalls, and the poor rewards. It was a long look forward; the future summoned me as with trumpet calls, it warned me back as with a voice of weeping and beseeching; and I thrilled and trembled on the brink of life, like a childish bather on the beach.

There was another young man on Earraid in these days, and we were much together, bathing, clambering on the boulders, trying to sail a boat and spinning round instead in the oily whirlpools of the roost. But the most part of the time we spoke of the great uncharted desert of our futures; wondering together what should there befall us; hearing with surprise the sound of our own voices in the empty vestibule of youth. As far, and as hard, as it seemed then to look forward to the grave, so far it seems now to look backward upon these emotions; so hard to recall justly that loath submission, as of the sacrificial bull, with which we stooped our necks under the yoke of destiny. I met my old companion but the other day; I cannot tell of course what he was thinking; but, upon my part, I was wondering to see us both so much at home, and so composed and sedentary in the world; and how much we had gained, and how much we had lost, to attain to that composure; and which had been upon the whole our best estate: when we sat there prating sensibly like men of some experience, or when we shared our timorous and hopeful counsels in a western islet.

R. L. STEVENSON.

ON GOING ABROAD

THE worst of going abroad is that the feeling of being abroad does not last beyond a few days unless one goes still further abroad to a new place. How exciting is the first day in Dieppe, with houses of a different shape and a different colour from the houses to which one is accustomed and with the names and the trades of the shopkeepers all seeming novel and fantastical! How much more charming still is Italy, with the shop-fronts painted all over with words ending in 'o' and 'ia' and 'a'! Even such a word as 'bottiglieria' seems to speak of a wine-bar in wonderland, and every jeweller's and haberdasher's and silk-merchant's gives as much pleasure to the fancy as if it were a shop discovered under the ocean with a merman for shopwalker and a concourse of mermaids serving at the counters. The look of the streets is so strange that one walks through them with a kind of secret smile. The policemen are different. The cabs are different. The boys selling lottery-tickets on the pavements, the Fascisti lurching along in their black shirts, the monks in their sandals, are all figures that break in with the effect of surprise on common experience, and for a few days one almost mistakes novelty for Paradise. For a few days one even finds oneself assiduously going into churches in a spirit of exaltation simply because they are not the churches of the city in which one lives. As for the food, how charming, if it is edible, is the first meal after one's arrival in a strange town! I confess I am incapable of criticizing the food in a foreign country—always excepting such dishes as boiled mussels, braised lettuces, etc.—for twenty-four hours after arrival. Even the *vin ordinaire*—which, to be quite honest, is usually no better than the ordinary wine at an English wine-merchants—seems worth a compliment at the first two meals, and, if one is of a romantic disposition, it may

ON GOING ABROAD

be a month or more before one discovers how bad it is. Time passes, however, and, even though abroad, we begin to feel at home. Things no longer please us merely because they are novel. We pass the shops with as little interest as if they bore above their windows such accustomed inscriptions as 'Family Butcher,' 'Stationer,' or 'Italian Warehouseman.' We cease to notice that the policemen look different from any other policemen. The trams no longer excite us by their unusual colour and design. The streets become our familiar walks. We find it extraordinarily easy to pass a church without going inside. The flavour of the food becomes monotonous. Our palate recovers its rectitude, and becomes critical of the wines. We realize that we were the victims of an illusion, and that we could have preserved the illusion only by going further and reviving it in another country or, at least, in another town. I am not sure that the illusion is worth having at the price, but many men have become nomads in pursuit of it, travelling from country to country as though no country could be delightful after it was known. They are lovers of the surface, easily enamoured of many places, but passionately in love with none. They hanker after China and Arabia, because they were not born there. If they had been born in China or Arabia, they would have hankered after England and a week-end at Brighton would have seemed to them like an episode in a legend. A great deal of travel, indeed, is little more than restlessness—a continual pursuit of novelty of sensation—and springs from the dread of the boredom of custom. It is as if a man wished to sit on a painted horse—and on a new kind of painted horse every day—in a perpetual merry-go-round.

There are, I know, profounder pleasures to be got later on from foreign places than these superficial excitements over novelties. But they are the same pleasures in kind that are to be had at home. The senses are no longer the supreme means of enjoyment, but the

ROBERT LYND

affections are engaged, and we love the things around us all the more because they are familiar. We no longer live in obedience to a guide-book, but have made a new map of the place for ourselves in which many sights that the guide-book exalts are left out and many things not mentioned in the guide-book stand out as prominently as museums and cathedrals. Not that I would speak ill of guide-books. I cannot comfortably go about with one in my hand or consult it in public with eyes that glance backwards and forwards between the book and some ruined temple or great man's tomb. But I like to have one by me for an occasional private hint, and I like, on getting back to the hotel after a morning spent in sight-seeing, to take up the guide-book and see what I have seen, and also what I have missed. I feel a little humiliated if, after having gone half across Europe and spent a morning in one of the show-places of the world, I have on coming home to answer 'No' to the questions: 'Did you see this?' 'Did you find that?'; 'Did you notice that wonderful so-and-so? Oh, what a pity! It's the gem of the whole place.' The guide-book judiciously studied will save you from many of these humiliations, though not from all, for the ordinary traveller is a jealous being and will not be content till he has proved that you have overlooked the thing without parallel—that, if you have seen the right picture, you have seen it in the wrong light by going in the afternoon instead of the morning—that your day spent in visiting some famous church was wasted because you didn't see the cloisters, as the cloisters are the only thing that raises it above fifty other churches of the same kind. So far as I can judge, it is the object of many travellers to convince some poor fellow-creature just returned from abroad that he might as well have stayed at home, and that he has not used any of his opportunities. They even try to prove that you have eaten in the wrong restaurants, taken the wrong guide-book, and stayed at the wrong hotel. They beam with a horrible philanthropy

ON GOING ABROAD

as they condole with you over what you have missed. But you know all the time that they are secretly enjoying your poverty of experience and congratulating themselves on their own riches. When I was younger, and bolder than I am now, I could have stood up to these people better, and told them with half-truth that I hate sight-seeing, and that, of the famous sights that I have seen, not more than half have given me more pleasure than I could get in a London park. I have now a sort of cowardly longing to see everything that everybody talks about, though the pleasure of seeing many of these things is little more than the pleasure of curiosity satisfied. The trouble is that the imagination is not a slave that will take orders from us and that will respond as it is expected to respond at all times and in all places. We go in its company to see a great picture, and stand waiting for its verdict. If we held a dialogue with it, we should say on many such occasions: 'Come now. This is one of the great pictures of the world. Everybody says so. At least, everybody says so except the people who always contradict what everybody says. Don't you admire it, too? You don't seem very enthusiastic. Don't you think it very good?' And the imagination would—at least, now and then—reply: 'I don't know whether it's good or not, and to-day I don't care. You dragged me here against my will, when I would rather you had sat down in a chair outside a café and watched the buses passing. Besides, picture-galleries always depress me. The human beings in them never look natural. Many of them look like uneasy ghosts that have wandered into the wrong hell. The ones that are enjoying themselves and expressing their enjoyment aloud are still more disturbing. I can't help listening to them, and one cannot be absorbed in the conversation of one's fellow-creatures and in the Holy Family at the same time. If you had brought me here yesterday, I might have felt differently, so I shan't go so far as to say that the picture is positively bad. But to-day I

ROBERT LYND

simply don't enjoy looking at it. Don't let's bother any more about pictures to-day. Come along to a café.' And how gladly we should go!

When once you have settled down and feel really at home in a new place, you need no longer drag your imagination about in this fashion, seeing the things you ought to see instead of the things you wish to see. The resident alien in London does not visit Westminster Abbey with a guide-book, nor does he even go into the National Gallery except when it is the whim of his imagination to do so. If he likes London, it is not because of the things that are marked as important in the guide-books about London. It is because of the things that he discovers capriciously and by accident. He can live in his own London, not in other people's London. London becomes to him a city of personal associations and is no longer a mere capital of famous sights. We are sometimes told that the American visitor sees more of London than the people who live in it. This, I think, is true only in a superficial sense. The American sees more of guide-book London, but the Londoner sees more of the London that is worth seeing. He sees his own house and his friend's houses—buildings that contain far more of the things that make life interesting to him than cathedrals and palaces and museums of the arts. He sees his own garden, which contains more pleasures for him than the greatest of the parks, and he sees his own cat, which surpasses the King's horses or the lordliest beast in the Zoo as the paragon of animals. And do not think that he does not see as many novelties as if he were taxi-ing from church to church and from museum to museum in a foreign city. The seasons alone should give a man all the novelties he needs. The very street in which he lives changes from hour to hour. It is one street when the sun is shining, another street in rain, and another under the full moon. Foreign travel is pleasant chiefly because it makes us realize that we are among novelties, but

ON GOING ABROAD

when we are sufficiently awake to see the constant flow of novelties in the world at our doors, we can enjoy all the excitement of foreign travel along with the pleasure of being at home. The worst of it is that, though I know this, I also know that if I had a fortune I should spend some of it in Florence, and a little in Assisi, and might even be tempted as far as Athens. But no further. I don't mind reading about the ends of the earth in fiction or in travel-books, but I trust that, if I ever see them, it will be many years hence and from a window in Heaven. If I were offered a free trip round the world, I might accept the offer through weakness, but I do not wish to go round the world. Have I not been round the sun once a year ever since I was born? That seems to have satisfied any cravings I may have had for distant travel, or at least to have made a jaunt round this pigmy earth a matter of small consequence. Besides, I should hate to meet all those people who are described in the books by anthropologists. I would far rather go to Southend than to the South Seas. And I don't very much want to go to Southend.

ROBERT LYND.

FORGETTING

A LIST of articles lost by railway travellers and now on sale at a great London station has been published during the week, and many people who read it have been astonished at the absent-mindedness of their fellows. If statistical records were available on the subject, however, I doubt whether it would be found that absent-mindedness is common. It is the efficiency rather than the inefficiency of human memory that compels my wonder. Modern man remembers even telephone numbers. He remembers the addresses of his friends. He remembers the dates of good vintages. He remembers appointments for lunch and dinner. His memory is crowded with the names of actors and actresses and cricketers and footballers and murderers. He can tell you what the weather was like in a long-past August, and the name of the provincial hotel at which he had a vile meal during the summer. In his ordinary life, again, he remembers almost everything that he is expected to remember. How many men in all London forget a single item of their clothing when dressing in the morning? Not one in a hundred. Perhaps not one in ten thousand. How many of them forget to shut the front door when leaving the house? Scarcely more. And so it goes on through the day, almost everybody remembering to do the right thing at the right moment till it is time to go to bed, and then the ordinary man seldom forgets to turn off the lights before going upstairs.

There are, it must be admitted, some matters in regard to which the memory works with less than its usual perfection. It is only a very methodical man, I imagine, who can always remember to take the medicine his doctor has prescribed for him. This is the more surprising because medicine should be one of the easiest things to remember. As a rule, it is supposed to be taken

FORGETTING

before, during, or after meals, and the meal itself should be a reminder of it. The fact remains, however, that few but the moral giants remember to take their medicine regularly. Certain psychologists tell us that we forget things because we wish to forget them, and it may be it is because of their antipathy to pills and potions that many people fail to remember them at the appointed hours. This does not explain, however, how it is that a lifelong devotee of medicines like myself is as forgetful of them as those who take them most unwillingly. The very prospect of a new and widely advertised cure-all delights me. Yet, even if I have the stuff in my pocket, I forget about it as soon as the hour approaches at which I ought to swallow it. Chemists make their fortunes out of the medicines people forget to take.

The commonest form of forgetfulness, I suppose, occurs in the matter of posting letters. So common is it that I am always reluctant to trust a departing visitor to post an important letter. So little do I rely on his memory that I put him on his oath before handing the letter to him. As for myself, anyone who asks me to post a letter is a poor judge of character. Even if I carry the letter in my hand I am always past the first pillar-box before I remember that I ought to have posted it. Weary of holding it in my hand, I then put it for safety into one of my pockets and forget all about it. After that, it has an unadventurous life till a long chain of circumstances leads to a number of embarrassing questions being asked, and I am compelled to produce the evidence of my guilt from my pocket. This, it might be thought, must be due to a lack of interest in other people's letters; but this cannot be the explanation, for I forget to post some even of the few letters that I myself remember to write.

As for articles left in railway-trains and in taxis, I am no great delinquent in such matters. I can remember almost anything except books and walking-sticks, and I can often remember even books. Walking-

ROBERT LYND

sticks I find it quite impossible to keep. I have an old-fashioned taste for them, and I buy them frequently, but no sooner do I pay a visit to a friend's house or go a journey in a train, than another stick is on its way into the world of the lost. I dare not carry an umbrella for fear of losing it. To go through life without ever having lost an umbrella—has even the grimmest-jawed umbrella-carrier ever achieved this?

Few of us, however, have lost much property on our travels through forgetfulness. The ordinary man usually arrives at his destination with all his bags and trunks safe. The list of articles lost in trains during the year suggests that it is the young rather than the adult who forget things, and that sportsmen have worse memories than their ordinary serious-minded fellows. A considerable number of footballs and cricket-bats, for instance, were forgotten. This is easy to understand, for boys, returning from the games, have their imaginations still filled with the visions of the playing-field, and their heads are among the stars—or their hearts in their boots—as they recall their exploits or their errors. They are abstracted from the world outside them. Memories prevent them from remembering to do such small prosaic things as take the ball or the bat with them when they leave the train. For the rest of the day, they are citizens of dreamland. The same may be said, no doubt, of anglers who forget their fishing-rods. Anglers are generally said—I do not know with what justification—to be the most imaginative of men—and the man who is inventing magnificent lies on the journey home after a day's fishing is bound to be a little absent-minded in his behaviour. The fishing-rod of reality is forgotten by him as he daydreams over the feats of the fishing-rod of Utopia. His loss of memory is really a tribute to the intensity of his enjoyment in thinking about his day's fishing. He may forget his fishing-rod, as the poet may forget to post a letter, because his mind is filled with matter more glorious.

FORGETTING

Absent-mindedness of this kind seems to me all but a virtue. The absent-minded man is often a man who is making the best of life and therefore has no time to remember the mediocre. Who would have trusted Socrates or Coleridge to post a letter? They had souls above such things.

The question whether the possession of a good memory is altogether desirable has often been discussed, and men with fallible memories have sometimes tried to make out a case for their superiority. A man, they say, who is a perfect remembering machine is seldom a man of the first intelligence, and they quote various cases of children or men who had marvellous memories, and who yet had no intellect to speak of. I imagine, however, that on the whole the great writers and the great composers of music have been men with exceptional powers of memory. The poets I have known have had better memories than the stockbrokers I have known. Memory, indeed, is half the substance of their art. On the other hand, statesmen seem to have extraordinarily bad memories. Let two statesmen attempt to recall the same event—what happened, for example, at some Cabinet meeting—and each of them will tell you that the other's story is so inaccurate that either he has a memory like a sieve or is an audacious perverter of the truth. The frequency with which the facts of the autobiographies and speeches of statesmen are challenged suggests that the world has not yet begun to produce ideal statesmen—men who, like great poets, have the genius of memory and of intellect.

At the same time, ordinarily good memory is so common that we regard a man who does not possess it as eccentric. I have heard of a farmer who, having offered to take the baby out in a perambulator, was tempted by the sunny morning to pause on his journey and slip into a public house for a glass of beer. Leaving the infant outside, he disappeared through the door of a saloon bar. A little later his wife had to do some shopping which took

ROBERT LYND

her past the sleeping baby. Indignant at her husband's behaviour, she decided to teach him a lesson. She wheeled away the perambulator, picturing to herself his terror when he would come out and find the baby gone. She arrived home, anticipating with angry relish the white face and quivering lips that would soon appear with the news that the baby had been stolen. What was her vexation, however, when just before lunch her husband came in smiling cheerfully and asking: 'Well, my dear, what's for lunch to-day?' 'having forgotten all about the baby and the fact that he had taken it out with him. How many men below the rank of a philosopher would be capable of such absent-mindedness as this? Most of us, I fear, are born with prosaically efficient memories, and are incapable even of forgetting a fishing-rod in a railway train.

ROBERT LYND.

A DISAPPOINTED MAN

A BLIND man, having received his sight as the result of a remarkable operation, confessed the other day that he was so disappointed in the world he saw that he wondered whether he was not happier when he was blind. Human beings were of a different shape and appearance from those with which his imagination had endowed them. Everything apparently, from motor cars to flower gardens, fell short of the glorious images he had made of them. The gift of sight brought him merely disillusionment.

It is easy to understand his distress. Most of us have experienced the same sense of disillusionment when we have for the first time seen with our eyes something that we had hitherto idealised in our imagination. I remember being deeply disappointed in the first lion I saw. Until then I had regarded him as the King of Beasts and had attributed to him a size and majesty such as have never belonged to any real lion. The lion in the cage at the menagerie seemed to be only about one-third the size of the lion of my dreams, and he bore few marks of regality. Life in a cage in a travelling menagerie does not, I fancy, conduce to kingliness of bearing. The lion, however was not the only beast that fell below my expectations. The elephant himself was only a miniature of what I had imagined, and the camel a small, seedy, turkey-like animal with very little of the romance of the desert about him.

It may be that children exaggerate size in their imaginary pictures of animals they have not seen. They believe that lions and tigers belong to a gigantic animal world in comparison with which the everyday domestic animals are little more than dwarfs. They romanticise the very big and the very little, and are disenchanted by what seems to them rather ordinary bulk. I myself, I

ROBERT LYND

confess, was disappointed in my first sight of London, not because London was not big enough, but because the buildings were not bigger. How modestly tiny Westminster Abbey seemed! How little of the grandiose there was in those days in the face of the Strand! There were famous theatres that were smaller than the theatres in my native city. As for Buckingham Palace, I am not sure whether it was because of its inadequate size that I was disappointed in the building, but it was certainly not my idea of a palace. Before one has seen a palace, the word 'palace' is extraordinarily romantic. One thinks of a palace as a building more wonderful than any other building, except, perhaps, a cathedral. To the imagination it expresses the glory of the world, not only in its towering bulk, but in the reckless splendour of its ornaments and its illuminations. It is such a palace as exists only in fairy-tales—a palace worthy of Cinderella. And Buckingham Palace was not that.

In order to appreciate the beauty of existing things, I suspect one has to get used to them. Familiarity, they say, breeds contempt, but it also breeds liking. In this part of the world most of us are familiar with horses from our childhood, and so—apart from the betting-ring—we have never been disappointed in horses. We have never conjured up the picture of an ideal horse quite unlike a real horse and then complained that the real horse was ugly in comparison with it. Yet, if one had been brought up in a horseless island, and knew nothing of horses except from legends of their speed and strength and beauty, might one not have made such a fantastically false, if beautiful, picture of a horse for oneself that one would have been shocked by one's first sight of Golden Miller even at Cheltenham? 'This,' one might well have said, 'is not the horse of my dreams.' The man who has never seen a horse before expects too much from the first sight of one: he expects it even to be unlike a horse. Familiarity, however, has taught the rest of us what to expect in a horse, and to admire it for being

A DISAPPOINTED MAN

what it is, even to the Wordsworthian countenance. On the other hand, I have heard an Englishman declare that he was disappointed in his first sight of an Arab horse. Ever since learning 'The Arab's Farewell to His Steed' at school he had loved an imaginary Arab horse which was like the finest kind of English race-horse, and the short-necked Arab animal he saw seemed to him unworthy of the name of 'steed.'

It is possible that, if we could be transported back into the Middle Ages, many of us would also be disappointed in the appearance of the horses which the knights rode into battle. Were these great war-horses really as beautiful as the cavalry horses of modern times? I have been told by a man who professes to know something of the subject that the medieval war-horse, unlike the charger in nineteenth-century war pictures, was a heavy lumbering brute of a kind that would nowadays be put to work on a farm. Even the knights might have been disappointing. The eye is more realistic than the imagination, and realism is usually the way of disillusionments.

We can avoid disappointment only by not expecting the wrong thing and by not expecting too much. Too great anticipation is often the enemy of pleasure. How often has our enjoyment of a good book been injured by our having been led to expect to find it a masterpiece! I am sure I have been disappointed in more good films than bad films simply because good films are so rare that they are enormously overpraised. The photography and the acting may be up to your anticipations, but how often the imaginative substance of the piece is as commonplace as that of a Victorian novelette! At a bad film, however, from which you expect nothing, you often find yourself delighted by some unexpected comic situation or piece of good acting. There is much to be said for confining your visits to the cinema to bad or mediocre plays: it will spare you many a disappointment.

Every traveller or tourist has known at some time or

ROBERT LYND

other the pangs of disappointed anticipation and the pleasures of the unexpected. Oscar Wilde was disappointed in the Atlantic Ocean, and other men have been disappointed in the Taj Mahal and in the Mosque at Cordova. People with ardent imaginations invent for themselves largely false pictures of famous and beautiful places, and then complain bitterly that the famous and beautiful places are unlike the pictures. I have met people who jeered at Clovelly merely because they had heard of its beauty before they visited it. If they had come on it unexpectedly as an unknown place I am sure they would have been entranced by it. I was so fortunate as to visit Clovelly for the first time after hearing it dispraised, and, expecting nothing, was enabled to realise that it is a village that men and women would travel two days and nights to see if it were not in England. I myself, however, have for some time past given up expecting a famous place to be like what I expect it to be like, and so am seldom painfully disappointed. I once committed the sin of being disappointed in Rome, because its appearance did not turn out to be in accordance with my forecast. To-day it causes me no dismay to find my prophetic visions falsified. I make a quiet mental readjustment, and try to be interested—occasionally with success—in things as they are.

In time, no doubt, the man cured of blindness will become equally philosophic. He will learn not to expect every human face to be as beautiful as a face seen in a dream. He will learn not to be surprised to see marks of cunning, greed and cruelty here and there on the faces he passes in the street, and not to feel woebegone because every man has not the face of a Greek god and every woman the face of a Helen. He will learn to take for granted ugly houses in ugly streets and to be grateful because some beautiful houses are left. And, after surveying the hideousness of the world, he will emerge from the depths and see that, in spite of ribbon

A DISAPPOINTED MAN

development, slag-heaps, and some far from attractive faces, the world in spring is nevertheless beautiful.

Or it may be that the man cured of blindness is right in refusing to come to terms with facts and in demanding a world, not beautiful in shreds and patches, but as beautiful as the world of his fancy. Unfortunately, we cannot be sure that the man's ideal world would strike us as being more beautiful than the world we know. The fact is that other people's beautiful things and places are often to the rest of us the most disappointing things and places on earth. Who has ever wanted to live in anybody else's Utopia?

ROBERT LYND.

NOTES

OF TRAVEL

Page

1. **the younger sort** : younger people.
some entrance into : some acquaintance with.
grave : sober, responsible.
allow well : heartily approve.
so that he be : provided he is.
discipline : training, instruction.
hooded : blindfolded. A metaphor from falconry : hawks were blindfolded when not pursuing game.
abroad : in its orig. sense, i.e., widely, in different directions.
observation : i.e., what they go to see.
consistories ecclesiastic : church assemblies.
of state and pleasure : fine and pleasant.
burses : bourses, exchanges. The Bourse in Paris corresponds to the London Royal Exchange.
cabinets : picture galleries and museums.
2. **triumphs** : pageants, public spectacles.
masks : stage plays popular in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
card : chart, map.
adamant of acquaintance : magnet to attract friends. The word adamant was applied to (1) steel, (2) the diamond (which is derived from the word through the French *diamant*), and (3) loadstone or magnet, as here.
diet : have his meals.
employed men : attachés.
in all kinds : of all kinds.
how the life . . . fame : whether the man in the flesh justifies his reputation.
healths : toasts.
place : precedence.
words : abuse or insults.
choleric : quick to anger. See n. on "humour" to p. 18.
engage him into : embroil him in.
3. **advised** : cautious, deliberate, considered.
his country manners : the manners of his homeland.
prick in : implant.

NOTES

Page

OF STUDIES

4. **for ability** : to make men able.
privateness and retiring : privacy and retirement.
disposition : regulation.
expert men : men of experience.
plots and marshalling : planning and management.
affectation : pedantry.
humour : peculiar characteristic. See n. to p. 18.
pruning : cultivation (not merely lopping).
at large : vague.
bounded in : limited, checked.
crafty : practical.
simple : foolish.
admire : wonder at.
use : put to practical use, apply.
without them : outside or beyond them.
curiously : with scrupulous care.
would be : ought to be.
arguments : subjects.
flashy : tasteless, insipid.
conference : conversation. So *confer* below = converse.
writing : making written notes.
present : prompt, ready.
wit : understanding.
cunning : ingenuity.
5. **that he doth not** : what he does not.
witty : imaginative. See n. on *wit* below.
natural philosophy . . . **moral** : natural philosophy is what we should term to-day *natural science*, i.e., physics, astronomy, chemistry, biology, geology, etc. : moral philosophy is what we should call *philosophy*, i.e., ethics and metaphysics. In the eighteenth century *philosophy* was regularly used as a general term equivalent to our *science*, whereas *science* was generally used in the sense of knowledge.
grave : serious.
"Abeunt studia in mores" : studies influence character.
stand : obstacle.
wit : intellect. The word *wit* in the Elizabethan period is used in several different senses :—i. the mind, intellect, mental faculties or powers ; ii. imagination, power of invention ; iii. sound sense, judgment, understanding ; iv. wisdom. Three of these senses are found in this essay.
wrought out : worked out, i.e., removed.
bowling : bowls.
stone : a disease of the reins (kidneys).
shooting : archery.

NOTES

Page

5. breast : chest.

schoolmen : e.g., Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Ockham, etc., medieval writers on theology, logic and metaphysics who attempted to reconcile Aristotle with the Scriptures. Scholasticism, as their doctrines and methods were termed, degenerated in its later days into formal discussion of futile logical subtleties, and became a synonym for barren learning divorced from the realities of life.

"Cymini sectores" : lit. "splitters of cummin-seeds," the Latin translation of the Greek *κυμνοσπίστης*, which means niggard or skinflint. But Bacon obviously intends the phrase to mean "hair-splitters."

beat over : a metaphor from hunting : examine carefully after a thorough search.

lawyer's cases : legal precedents established by judgments in previous similar cases.

receipt : recipe for its cure.

OF GARDENS

6. handyworks : works of men's hands.

ever : always.

civility : civilisation.

stately : (adv.) finely, grandly.

hold it : consider, maintain.

royal ordering : arranging on a royal (i.e., magnificent) scale.

pineapple-trees : trees growing the fir cone or pine-apple.

Cf. oak-apple.

flags : irises.

stoved : i.e., in hot-houses.

warm set : planted in a warm, sunny spot.

mezereon-tree : olive spurge.

chamaïris : dwarf iris.

fritellaria : fritillary, snakeshead.

cornelian-tree : a species of cherry-tree, cornel.

stock-gilliflower : common stock.

flower-de-luces : fleur de lys.

damascene : damson.

7 flos Africanus : African marigold.

ribes : flowering currants.

satyrian : orchis.

herba muscaria : grape hyacinth.

lilium convallium : lily of the valley.

genitings : early apples.

melocotones : peaches of a particular variety.

cornelians : fruit of the cornel-tree.

NOTES

Page

7. **wardens:** i.e., warden pears (*warden* is probably a corruption of *garden*).
services: the small pear-shaped fruit of the service-tree.
bullaces: wild plums.
"ver perpetuum": perpetual Spring.
fast . . . of their smells: do not readily give out their perfumes.
Bartholomew-tide: see n. to p. 59.
bent: a kind of grass.
clove gilliflower: carnation.
so they be: provided they are.
8. **alleys:** paths.
prince-like: princely.
the going forth: exit.
finely shorn: cut close.
go in front upon: advance towards.
of either side: on either side.
covert alley: a sheltered path.
carpenter's work: i.e., trellis work.
knots: beds.
toys: trifles.
entire hedge: continuous fence.
belly: bulge.
9. **slope:** sloping.
but to leave: but that there should be left.
for letting: because of hindering.
For the ordering: as for . . .
busy: fussy, elaborate.
welts: edgings, borders.
fair columns: fine columns.
closer: narrower.
ascents: flights of steps.
bulwarks or embossments: balustrades or projections.
chimneys neatly cast: fireplaces neatly arranged.
receipt: receptacle.
10. **as it never stay:** so that it never stands.
by rest: by being stagnant.
curiosity: ingenuity.
statuas: this Latin word was not yet naturalised into statue.
equality of bores: pipes of similar bore.
stay: see n. above.
arching water: making water form an arch.
nothing to: do not contribute to.
11. **bear's foot:** hellebore.
pricked: planted.

NOTES

Page

11. but here . . . : but *only* here . . .
 out of course : beyond bounds.
 going wet : having to walk on wet ground.
 ranges : rows.
 deceive : deprive the trees of nourishment.
 of some pretty height : pretty (i.e., fairly) high.
 rest upon: depend upon.
 make account : take into account.
12. except . . . turfed: unless they are large enough to be turfed.
 platform : plan.
 spared . . . cost : not considered economy.
 that, for the most part . . . : who very often, after consulting with workmen, lay out their grounds at an expense no less than that involved by my scheme.
 state : show, display.
 nothing to : see n. to p. 10 above.

THE FINE GENTLEMAN

13. to the purpose : to the point.
 modish : fashionable.
 blots . . . escutcheon: signs of depravity : *escutcheon* is the shield bearing a person's coat of arms.
 excepted to : took exception to.
 frieze : a rough, coarse homespun material.
 strike in : agree.
14. mum : strong ale.
 piddling: fiddling, trifling—"pecking delicately at" as we might say.
 antagonist : his fellow-diner sitting opposite.
 in complaisance : out of deference or politeness. ✓
 testy : ill-humoured, cantankerous.
 counterfeits : base imitations.
 in order to this : accordingly.
 premise in general : state as a general introduction.
 would have joined : wish to have in addition.
 inordinate : immoderate, extreme.
15. a long series of education : a long, graduated and progressive training of the mind and body.
 sciences : departments of knowledge.
 policies : politics, i.e., methods of government.
 men of letters : learned men.
 compass : extent.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION

16. natural philosophers : see n. to p. 5.

NOTES

Page

16. **knots** : rosettes.
17. **redundancy** : luxuriance.
insinuated : gradually introduced.
vulgar : ordinary common people.
18. **moral writers** : writers on moral philosophy : see n. to p. 5.
divert : entertain, amuse.
out of humour : annoyed, displeased. The word *humour* orig. meant moisture; then it was used particularly of the four fluids (blood, phlegm, choler, and melancholy) which were supposed by medieval physiologists to be in the human body, and relative proportions of which determined a man's *temperament* (i.e., sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric or melancholic). So it came to mean a man's disposition, whether permanent (i.e., character) or temporary (i.e., mood or temper). Other derived meanings are (1) fancy, whim, caprice, idiosyncrasy ; (2) inclination or disposition for something. The modern meaning is comparatively late.
discover : reveal, disclose.
improper : unsuitable.
engrossing : monopolising.
19. **positive** : assertive, dogmatic.
an empty . . . sentence : " people who have got one or more general principles which they apply by rule of thumb to the various situations in which they find themselves. . . . They have simple remedies for every abuse and simple formulas for solving every problem. They are well supplied with mottoes and tags for every occasion and they trot them out and imagine they clinch arguments for good and all." See the Editor's *Teach Yourself to Think*, Chap. VI.
science : knowledge.
Mr. Cowley : Abraham (1618-67), essayist and poet.
decency : becoming modesty.
happy turn : a felicitously turned phrase.
sycophants : toadies, satellites, hangers-on.
raillery : banter, chaff, good-humoured ridicule.
The verb is *rally*.
20. **reigning** : topical.
nicely : exactly.
accidents : incidental characteristics.
openings to : revelations of.
glaring : conspicuous.
full charged : fully laden
humour : here = mood : see n. to p. 18.
become : show off to advantage.
21. **polite** : well-bred, cultured.

NOTES

Page

SIR ROGER AND WILL. WIMBLE

22. **with his service** : with his best respects.
Jack : pike.
23. **to a miracle** : with remarkable skill.
officious : obliging.
setting-dog . . . **made** : a setter he has trained.
humours : peculiarities, eccentricities. See n. to p. 18.
proceeding . . . **him** : in the course of describing his character.
hazel-twigs : for fishing-rods.
discovered : see n. to p. 18.
sprung : put up.
24. **foiled it** : prevented it from escaping.
quail-pipe : for making a noise like a quail's note to attract birds into a snare.
affairs : business or politics.
humour : peculiar prejudice.
25. **but** : that.
inventions : devices.
improper : see n. to p. 18.
turned : adapted.

SIR ROGER AT THE PLAY

26. **Distressed Mother** : Andromache, widow of the Trojan hero Hector, and mother of Astyanax. On the fall of Troy and the distribution of captives among the victorious Greeks, she fell to the lot of Pyrrhus. Of the other characters mentioned, Hermione was the wife, first of Pyrrhus, and then of Orestes. Orestes was the son of Agamemnon, the Greek leader, and his bosom-friend was Pylades. Orestes and Pylades (like Damon and Pythias, and David and Jonathan) are proverbial types of firm and inseparable friends.
Mohocks : aristocratic ruffians who infested the London streets at night in the early eighteenth century. The name is derived from Mohawks, a N. American Indian tribe reputed to be cannibals.
Norfolk St. : running from the Strand to the Thames-side.
27. **Steenkirk** : where William III was defeated by the French, 1692.
natural : spontaneous, unsophisticated.
28. **Pyrrhus his** : Pyrrhus's: cf. Prayer Book "for Jesus Christ his sake."
29. **baggage** : saucy wench.
smoke : quiz, ridicule, "pull his leg."

NOTES

Page

THE MAN OF THE TOWN

30. **rencounter** : Fr. *rencontre*, encounter.
31. **templar** : lawyer; one with chambers in the Temple, where the legal fraternities have their quarters.
out of his profession . . . : outside his profession . . .
distempers : illnesses.
blown upon by common fame : rendered stale or hackneyed by being freely repeated.
ombre : a card-game, immortalised in Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.
making lodgments : securing footholds in the enemy's fortifications.
32. **Westminster Hall** : the principal seat of justice from the time of Henry III until the nineteenth century, and the scene of many great trials (e.g., Charles I and Warren Hastings).
out of the gazette : i.e., outside news officially reported in the Gazette.
finishes : adds the finishing touches to.
impertinence : irrelevance.

THE VISION OF JUSTICE

33. **benchers** : senior members of an Inn of Court, roughly corresponding to the "fellows" of an Oxford or Cambridge College.
philosophy : see n. to p. 5.
34. **discovers** : see n. to p. 18.
the Balance : the sign of the Zodiac known as *Libra* or The Scales.
justice : is usually symbolically represented as a blind-folded woman holding a pair of scales.
35. **instruments** : documents, proofs.
conveyance : the legal term for transfer of property.
interlineations : words interpolated between the lines.
codicils : additions or modifications to wills.
36. **plums** : i.e., enviable because of their vast wealth.
diffused : scattered.
37. **liveries** : the uniforms of servants or lacqueys.
40. **harpy** : orig. a mythical, rapacious monster with a woman's body and bird's wings and claws.
41. **censoriousness** : fault-finding.
42. **detraction** : disparaging or maligning people's reputations.
partiality : incompleteness.

FROZEN WORDS

43. **Sir John Mandeville** : a fictitious person under whose

NOTES

Page

43. name appeared a book of travels which was really a compilation from different sources. It is a very entertaining book, in which geography and romance, and natural history and 'tall stories' are blended indiscriminately.
Pinto : d. 1583, a Portuguese traveller, whose story of his Eastern travels is marked by an over-fertile imagination.
extract . . . journal : this is really a parody.
Hudibras : a satire by Samuel Butler (1612-1680).
44. **relation** : narrative.
Nec vox . . . : neither voice nor words followed.
45. **as they were . . . congealed** : according as . . .
choleric : see n. to p. 18 on 'humour.'
strappado : securing his hands with ropes, raising him and then letting him fall until pulled up by drawing the rope tight.
Wapping : a district of 'alleys of small tenements inhabited by sailors and victuallers' on the N. bank of the Thames immediately E. of the Tower of London.
offer at speaking : offer to speak.
46. **Et timide . . .** : 'and he fearfully tries again to resume the interrupted talk.'
cabin, who . . . : cabin, the inmates of which.
giving : mitigation.
kit : small fiddle used by a dancing master.
et tuer le temps : and to kill time.
prolix : long-winded.

THE CHARACTER OF AN IMPORTANT TRIFLER

49. **squeezed a lemon** : lemon juice is one of the ingredients of punch.
hold : bet.
50. **nice** : fastidious, particular.
assafoetida : a resinous gum used as a flavouring.

HIS CHARACTER CONTINUED

51. **temple spectacles** : s. with hinged side-pieces gripping the temples.
52. **Creolan** : Creole, i.e., of West Indian descent.
Carolina . . . : Goldsmith was evidently fond of this conjunction of female christian names. One of the 'great acquaintances from town' who descended upon the Vicar of Wakefield was Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs.
prospects : views, scenery.
53. **politest** : see n. to p. 21.
54. **Grisoni** : Giuseppe (1700-69), an Italian painter who excelled in portraiture and the painting of historical subjects.
keeping : harmony of colour and composition.

NOTES

Page

54. **mechanical** : mean, vulgar.
dishabille : untidy dress.
the gardens . . . horns : Vauxhall Gardens, the popular pleasure resort on the south bank of the Thames. They were opened in 1661 and closed in 1859. French horns were a feature of the musical entertainment there.
ortolan : the garden bunting, esteemed as a table delicacy.

NATIONAL PREJUDICES

55. **sycophants** : see n. to p. 19.
 56. **pseudo-patriot** : sham or pretending patriot.
suffrage : vote.
jealous : suspicious.
 57. **reckoning** : the amount of my bill.
the philosopher : Socrates.

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER

59. **St. James's Park** : a favourite resort of those who had to go dinnerless. According to a contemporary authority, there they 'counted the trees for a dinner.'
Merry Andrew : clown.
Bartholomew Fair : held in the Smithfield from 1133 to 1840 at Bartholomew-tide, i.e., round about the feast of St. Bartholomew, August 24th. Originally a cloth fair, it later degenerated into a 'resort of showmen, jugglers, and strolling players.'
Rosemary-lane : in Whitechapel: numbers of old-clothes dealers lived there.
to be my three half-pence : to be = to pay, contribute, 'be good for.'
 60. **fondlings** : pets, favourites.
Calvert's . . . Sedgeley's : brewers.
Tokay : a Hungarian wine.
 61. **cried** : announced for sale.
points of war : strains of martial music.
listed : enlisted.
gave me the spleen : made me low-spirited and ill-tempered.
 63. **Mirabels** : a name commonly given in seventeenth and eighteenth century comedy to noisy revellers.
grig : usually explained as = cricket.
Tenterden : a charming country town in Kent.
 64. **falling sickness** : epilepsy.
 55. **King Bajazet** : a character in Rowe's *Tamerlane* (1702). *Tamerlane*, d. 1405, a descendant of the great Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan, subdued Persia and India where he

NOTES

Page

65. founded the Mogul dynasty. In the course of his conquests he defeated Bajazet, King of the Ottoman Turks.
jack-chain : the chain of a machine for turning a spit in roasting meat.
66. **By Allah!** : an appropriate expletive to use at this point.
67. **Sir Harry Wildair** : and Alderman Smuggler (p. 68) are characters in Farquhar's comedy *The Constant Couple* (1700). Sir Harry was 'an airy gentleman, affecting humorous gaiety and freedom in his behaviour.'
Garrick : David (1717-79), the famous actor and manager of Drury Lane Theatre : the friend of Goldsmith, Johnson, Reynolds, and most of the well-known men of the day.

MAD DOGS

This essay appeared in the *Public Ledger* of August 29th, 1760, at the height of a hydrophobia scare. Only three days before an official order had been issued for the destruction of all dogs found in the streets. A week later Horace Walpole writes: 'The streets are a very picture of the murder of the innocents; one drives over nothing but poor dead dogs.'

69. **epidemic evils** : evils prevalent and rapidly spreading in a country at a particular time.
flat-bottomed boat : a vessel to be used for transporting French soldiers to England. As later in the Napoleonic Wars, so during the Seven Years' War (1756-63) there was fear of invasion by the French.
70. **beadle . . . halter** : policeman . . . muzzle.
buff gloves : gloves of stout leather.
neutral : this essay is one of those 'letters' purporting to be written by a Chinese traveller to a friend in his home country. Hence the writer's posing as a 'neutral.'
ideal calamities : calamities existing only in the imagination.
71. **congealed** : frozen with fear.
salt water : a popular remedy for a bite.
between two beds : in a contemporary number of *Lloyd's Evening Post* instances are quoted where partial suffocation was tried as a last resource in bad cases of hydrophobia.
seeking whom he may devour : 1 Peter v, 8.

ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE

74. **the true use . . . conceal them** : similar aphorisms are attributed to Voltaire and Talleyrand.
Seneca : Roman statesman and Stoic Philosopher (B.C. 3-65 A.D.).

NOTES

Page

75. Ovid : Roman poet of the Augustan age. The reference is perhaps to *Tristia*, II, 83, 4—'When a house is shaken and begins to collapse, the whole weight rests on the part that has tottered.'
78. **nicked the time** : hit upon the time: cf. 'in the nick o' time.'
fetches : tricks, subterfuges.
a walk in the Park : see n. to p. 59.
White Conduit House : a famous eighteenth-century tea-garden near the Charterhouse, E.C. The house was pulled down in 1849.
Kent Street : now Tabard Street, S.E.1, leading into the Old Kent Road, once 'chiefly inhabited by mumpers' (beggars).
The Mall : the spacious avenue, lined with trees, that skirts St. James's Park.
the Smyrna : a fashionable coffee-house in Pall Mall.
St. Giles's : the Soho quarter at the junction of Oxford Street, Tottenham Court Road and Charing Cross Road.
Ofellus : Horace, *Satires* II, ii.
 'The art of frugal living, and its worth
 To-day, my friends, Ofellus shall set forth'
 (Conington's translation).
Dr. Cheyne : d. 1743, advocated temperance and a vegetable diet.
gravel : a disease of the kidneys.
Samson Gideon : a rich Jewish broker, who raised several Government loans for Walpole.
Toga, quae . . . : Horace, *Satires*, I, iii, 15: 'clothes, however coarse, able to keep out the cold.'

ON GOING A JOURNEY

80. **I am then . . . alone** : a saying attributed by Cicero (*De Officiis* III, 1) to Scipio Africanus. 'He said he was never more busy than when he was at leisure, and never less lonely than when he was alone.'
 '**The fields . . .**' : Bloomfield, *The Farmer's Boy*.
 '**a friend . . .**' : Cowper, *Retirement*.
 '**May plume . . .**' : Milton, *Comus*, 378.
post-chaise : a carriage hired from stage to stage.
Tilbury : a gig or trap, so-called from its inventor.
let . . . impertinence : let me be done with matters that are not pertinent (i.e., not to the point, irrelevant).
 81. '**sunken wrack . . .**' : *Henry V*, I, ii, 165. Wrack = wreckage.

NOTES

Page

81. **analysis**: i.e., of sensations or ideas: the opposite of synthesis (see below, p. 82, lines 11, 12).
 'Leave, oh, leave . . .': Gray, *Descent of Odin*.
 'very stuff . . .': *Othello*, I, ii, 2.
 'Out upon . . .': 1 *Henry IV*, I, iii, 208.
 Mr. Cobbett: William (1766-1835), author of *Rural Rides*.
82. **Sterne**: Laurence (1713-68), novelist, author of *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey*.
synthetical method: i.e., building up a composite notion out of a series of impressions, as opposed to the analysis of each into component parts.
anatomise: cut up, dissect.
of accord: in agreement.
83. **didactic poem**: written to impart a lesson.
Pindaric ode: Pindar (d. 443 B.C.) wrote odes in celebration of victors at the Greek Games—longish poems, constructed on an elaborate and often irregular metrical scheme. Gray called his poem *The Bard* a Pindaric Ode.
 'He talked . . .': Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, V, v, 107.
All-Foxden: not far from Nether Stowey in Somerset, where Hazlitt visited Coleridge in 1798.
 'that fine . . .': Michael Drayton, *To Henry Reynolds*.
84. 'take one's ease . . .': 1 *Henry IV*, III, iii, 92.
 'The cups that . . .': Cowper, *The Task*, IV, 39.
Sancho: Sancho Panza, Don Quixote's squire, who took a rather unromantic interest in food.
Shandean: after the fashion of the father of Tristram Shandy (see n. to p. 82) who was incapable of concentrating on a serious subject for two minutes together.
85. **Procul . . . Profani**: 'Stand back, all you that have no right to play a part in these mysteries!' A formula used by Roman priests before the commencement of ceremonies or sacrifices. *Profani* = those who remain before (*pro*) the shrine (*fanum*), i.e., those not entitled to enter the 'holy of holies' hence, the uninitiated, lay people.
 ✓ **integrity**: wholeness, unbroken continuity.
he breaks no squares: he does not break the symmetrical perfection of my thoughts.
destroys . . . scene: i.e., by linking it up with real, concrete experiences.
it seems . . . do: the presence of a friend who knows your past makes you imagine that others know it too.
 'unhoused . . . confine': *Othello*, I, ii, 26. The general sense of the passage is:—'when there is no one who knows you,

NOTES

Page

35. you are free to indulge your fancy to an unlimited extent, to escape from the confined circle of reality, and to assume any identity your imagination suggests; but the presence of an acquaintance shatters this pleasant illusion; it "brings you to earth again"; you are forcibly reminded of your real identity, and once more circumscribed or confined within the narrow limits of "matter of fact."

the *incognito* of an inn: the opportunity provided by an inn of hiding one's real identity.

'lord . . . name': i.e., master of one's own existence, unhampered by the limitations imposed by one's name, family, antecedents, etc.

importunate: i.e., dogging our footsteps at every turn, difficult to get rid of.

to hold to: to be bound to.

score: bill, account.

36. **we baffle prejudice . . .**: strangers know nothing about us to make them prejudiced; in their curiosity, they may make guesses about us, but we do and say nothing to enlighten them.

we are no more . . . scores with society: in an inn where we are strangers, we no longer feel bound by the conventional obligations which, in the world, made us conform to the behaviour of other people; we return to our natural selves again, discarding these artificial restrictions and thus revenging ourselves on the society that imposed them.

metaphysical problem: abstruse philosophical problem.

Gribelin's engravings: Simon Gribelin (b. 1661) engraved the first complete set of Raphael's cartoons.

Westall: Richard, R.A., an illustrator of books who flourished about 1800.

Paul and Virginia: a romance (1787) by Bernadin de Saint-Pierre.

Madame D'Arblay: Fanny Burney (1751-1840), authoress of *Evelina*.

New Eloise: *La Nouvelle Heloise*, a romance by Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). The hero was St. Preux (mentioned below).

bon bouche: titbit.

37. **'green upland . . .'**: this and the next quotation are from Coleridge, *Ode on the Departing Year*.

faded . . . day: from Wordsworth, *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*.

'The beautiful . . .': Coleridge, *Death of Wallenstein*.

the river of Paradise . . .: cf. *Revelations* xxii, 17.

38. **'Beyond Hyde Park . . .'**: Etherege, *Man of Mode*.

conceit: conception.

NOTES

Page

89. **Stonehenge** : the remains of a Druidical temple.
'The mind . . . ' : Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I, 254.
'With glistening . . . ' : Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III, 550.
Bodleian : the University Library at Oxford, which Sir Thomas Bodley (1545-1613) began to form in 1598 and endowed in 1611.
Blenheim : the seat of the Duke of Marlborough at Woodstock, near Oxford.
Cicerone : attendant.
90. **pictures . . . fled** : the masterpieces of which Napoleon had despoiled the countries he had conquered and which he had hung in the Louvre, had after his defeat and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty been returned to their original owners.
91. **transports** : delights.
'jump' : ignore, forget. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, vii, 7.
is not to be domesticated : cannot be sustained at home.
Dr. Johnson remarked . . . : there is no mention of this remark in Boswell's *Life*.
to join kindly on to it : kindly = naturally.

THE LETTER-BELL

92. **'one . . . chrysolite'** : *Othello*, V, ii, 143. Chrysolite is a general term applied to green gems (e.g., topaz).
long line . . . hills : the Berwyns on the Welsh border.
Wem : a village ten miles north of Shrewsbury. Hazlitt's father was Unitarian minister there.
93. **Mrs. Siddons** : b. 1755, d. 1831; the great English tragic actress. She was the sister of John and Charles Kemble (see p. 127). For her consummate acting in the part of Lady Macbeth, see p. 102.
punctuating . . . articulate : these words contain similar ideas: the former = marking off into units, the latter = jointed, marked off in separate sounds or syllables.
ideal world : i.e., the world of imagination.
in embryo : in their small beginnings.
94. **a post-chaise and four** : see n. to p. 80: 'and four' = drawn by four horses.
Rembrandt . . . Vangoyen : famous seventeenth-century Dutch painters. Hazlitt is speaking of the time when he was studying painting in London.
'The slow canal . . . ' : Goldsmith, *The Traveller*, 293.
not the dandy-school : i.e., something more robust.
'While with an eye . . . ' : Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*. According to Wordsworth, close and sympathetic communion with Nature gives a man insight into life's mysteries.
'the secrets of the prison-house' : *Hamlet* I, v, 14.

NOTES

Page

95. **stalking-horse**: enabled a hunter to approach within shooting range of his quarry without disturbing it.
hobby-horse: a man rides a hobby, or hobby-horse, when he cultivates some occupation from sheer love of it.
when the professor . . . thoughts: 'when someone delegates the mechanical drudgery of an occupation to menials, he may thereby free his mental and physical energies to engage on other things, but he shows that he regards the occupation as no longer an end in itself, a hobby in which he takes whole-hearted delight, but as something merely secondary—a means to another end.'
'Made good digestion . . .': *Macbeth*, III, iv, 38.
conductors: a metaphor from electricity.
Scotch Novels: by Sir Walter Scott.
Gertrude of Wyoming: a poem by Thomas Campbell (1777–1844).
'more german . . .': *Hamlet*, V, ii, 165. German = related, akin: german to the matter = relevant.
96. **Putney and Brentford stages**: the stage-coaches engaged on suburban traffic to Putney and Brentford on the western outskirts of London.
'Hark ! 'tis . . .': *The Task*, IV.
beacon-fires . . . Aeschylus: see *Agamemnon*, 281–316.

MACBETH

(N.B. The Editor assumes that the reader is acquainted with the play.)

100. **Regan and Goneril**: King Lear's elder daughters.
 101. **dilate her form**: enlarge her stature.
 102. **panders to**: servile ministers of.
abortive: misshapen.
 105. **Gothic**: barbarous, uncouth.
metaphysical: supernatural.
 ✓ 106. **uxoriousness**: anxiety to please his wife.
 107. **thrall**: slave.
 108. **Furies of Aeschylus**: the Furies in Greek mythology were avenging deities who pursued those guilty of crimes. They were euphemistically called Eumenides (= the kindly-disposed women), and one of Aeschylus's trilogy dealing with the ill-fated house of Atreus is called by this name. The chorus in it consists of Furies.
Beggar's Opera: by John Gay (1685–1732).

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

110. ✓ **Confucius**: the great Chinese philosopher (d. 478 B.C.). The reference to the 'Mundane Mutations' (worldly changes) is fictitious.

NOTES

Page

110. **broiling** : cooking over a fire or on a gridiron. Cf. p. 113, l. 31.
mast : acorns and beech-nuts.
youngers : youngsters.
new-farrowed : newly-born : *farrow* = give birth to a litter of pigs.
111. **retributory** : avenging.
113. **Locke** : John (1632-1704), philosopher and educational theorist.
114. ***mundus edibilis*** : world of eatables.
princeps obsoniorum : prince of dainties.
hobbydehoys : now *hobbledehoy*s—in the awkward stage between boyhood and manhood.
amor immunditiae : love of filth.
praeludium : prelude.
tegument : skin.
adhesive oleaginous : oily stickiness.
quintessence : the most refined extract.
animal manna : flesh dropt from heaven.
ambrosian : ambrosia was the food, as nectar was the drink, of the gods.
string : i.e., of the spit.
shooting stars : it was a common belief that shooting stars left jellies where they fell.
115. **conversation** : behaviour (as in the Bible and *Pilgrim's Progress*).
ere sin . . . : Coleridge, *Epitaph on an Infant*.
clown : rustic.
sapors : flavours.
excoriateth : strips the skin off.
batten : feed.
envious : exciting envy, invidious.
presents . . . absents : an atrocious pun.
116. **'tame villatic fowl'** : Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1694.
'give everything' : *King Lear*, II, iv, 253.
extradomiciliate : Lamb revels in coining words from Latin.
insensibility : lack of feeling.
over London Bridge : Lamb, who wrote these essays under the pseudonym *Elia*, was fond of deliberately mystifying his readers. Christ's Hospital, where Lamb went to school, was in Newgate Street, and he would *not* have to cross London Bridge to get there.
117. **coxcombry** : conceit.
nice : see n. to p. 50.
intenerate : another Latinism = make tender.

NOTES

Page

117. **refining a violet** : improving upon something incapable of improvement : like 'painting the rose' or 'gilding the lily.' See *K. John*, IV, ii, 11, 12.
St. Omer's : a Jesuit College in France for Englishmen. Lamb was never there. See n. to p. 116.
per flagellationem extremam : by whipping to death.
barbecue : roast whole (vb.) : the noun = framework used for roasting an ox, hog, etc., whole.

OLD CHINA

118. **uncircumscribed by any element** : their positions or movements are apparently unconnected with the elements (i.e., earth, air and water) surrounding them.
Mandarin : Chinese noble.
a dainty mincing foot : walking with affected delicacy.
right angle : right = correct, *not* 90°. For an explanation of 'angle of incidence,' see a text-book on Physics.
hays : a country dance.
119. **couchant** : heraldic term = lying down.
Cathay : Marco Polo's name for the East.
Hyson : green tea with a strong aromatic flavour.
speciosa miracula : beautiful marvels : Horace (*Ars Poetica*, 144) thus describes the stories of Homer.
Bridget : a thin disguise for Lamb's sister Mary.
Beaumont and Fletcher : dramatic collaborators in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1609), and other plays. Lamb's folio copy can be seen in the British Museum ; it contains marginal notes in the handwriting of Lamb and Coleridge.
Barker's : at 19 Great Russell Street (now Russell Street) running from Covent Garden into Drury Lane. Lamb lived at No. 20 from 1817 to 1823.
120. **collating** : in bookbinding means verifying the order of sheets.
finical : fastidious.
corbeau : dark green, almost black.
Leonardo : da Vinci (1452-1519), the great Italian painter, architect, sculptor, musician and scientist. Perhaps his most famous painting is the portrait of Mona Lisa, now in the Louvre at Paris.
Colnaghi's : the picture dealer's, then in Pall Mall East, now in Bond Street.
Enfield, Potter's Bar, Waltham : villages in Middlesex or Essex, on the northern outskirts of London.
121. **Izaak Walton** : 1593-1683, author of *The Compleat Angler*, a discourse on Fishing. It takes the form of a dialogue in which Piscator (the author) instructs his pupil on the various

NOTES

Page

121. ways of catching fresh-water fish. The instruction is given as they fish along the river Lea. Trout Hall is the house of Piscator.

Battle of Hexham, Surrender of Calais : comedies by George Coleman (1762-1836).

Children in the Wood : a musical play by Thomas Morton (1764-1838).

Rosalind in Arden : in *As You Like It*.

Viola . . . Illyria : in *Twelfth Night*.

123. 'lusty brimmer' : tankards of ale filled to the brim. From Charles Cotton (1630-87), *To the New Year*,
'Then let us welcome the New Guest
With lusty brimmers of the best.'

124. **fathom line** : cf. 1 *Henry IV*, I, iii,
'By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground . . .'
Croesus : King of Lydia in sixth century B.C. : his riches were proverbial.

R— : Rothschild (1777-1836), the banker.

Bed-tester : the canopy of a four-poster bed.

BARBARA S—

A story, based partly on fact, of the actress Fanny Kelly (1790-1882).

125. **young Arthur** : in *K. John*, IV, i.

Richard . . . Duke of York . . . Prince of Wales : in *Richard III*. Edward, Prince of Wales (afterwards Edward V) and the Duke of York were the two princes murdered in the Tower of London by the orders of their uncle, Richard III.

Children in the Wood : see n. to p. 121. Miss Kelly did act in the original production at the Haymarket Theatre in 1793. Cf. n. to p. 116.

126. **principia** : beginnings (Lat.), and so a primer or 'first steps.'

pumice stone : for erasing: powdered pumice (or pounce) was used for blotting.

avoiding . . . experience : shrinking from taking an example from her own experience.

Little Son to Mrs. Porter's Isabelle: actually it was in the part of *Arthur* (see above) which Miss Kelly played to the *Constance* of *Mrs. Siddons* in *King John* in 1800 that this incident occurred. Lamb in this case does go so far as to confess that his 'memory' is vague!

127. **impediment** : Lamb stuttered, and but for this handicap

NOTES

Page

127. would probably have accompanied his schoolfellow Coleridge to Cambridge with a view to entering the Church.
Mr. Liston : he and most of the actors and actresses mentioned on this page were famous in their own day (late eighteenth and early nineteenth century), but they are mere names to us. Charles Kemble's sister was Mrs. Siddons (see pp. 93 and 102).
Diamond's : Diamond managed the theatre at Bath in the second half of the eighteenth century.
my own infirmity : a weakness for 'the bottle' ?
 129. **poor men's ... porticoes of moral philosophy** : poverty does not always breed honesty. In *porticoes* there is perhaps an allusion to the porch (*stoa*) where Zeno propounded the Stoic philosophy.
punctuality : in a general sense = exactitude.
 130. **a reason above reasoning** : she acted intuitively, not as a result of logical reasoning.
brightened up the feet and the prospects : what figure of speech is this? See Fowler, *King's English*, p. 173.
from ... Mrs. Crawford : actually L. heard it from Miss Kelly herself.
Lady Randolph : in Home's *Douglas* (1757).
Mrs. Siddons : see pp. 93 and 102.

CAPTAIN STARKEY

131. **an object and a May game** : something to be ridiculed and made fun of.
Fetter Lane : a street running from Fleet Street to Holborn in the City of London, E.C. It was easily accessible from the Temple, where Lamb's early years were spent.
 132. **ciphering** : arithmetic.
bastinado : caning (properly, on the soles of the feet).
 133. **Mr. Thomas Ranson** : 1724-1828, a line engraver.
 134. **tragedy of 'Cato'** : by Joseph Addison.

DEATHS OF LITTLE CHILDREN

136. **became his wisdom** : was a fitting tribute to his wisdom.
sophists : captious or specious reasoners.
'flesh-quakes' : fears, bugbears.
bow ... down : subdue, overcome.
 139. **our clay** : the coarse, earthly part of our bodily nature.
 140. **'knowledge of good and evil'** : see Genesis, ch. iii.
 It was the fruit of the tree of the 'knowledge of good and evil' that in disobedience of the divine command Eve took and gave to Adam. This disobedience resulted in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden and in the beginning of man's

NOTES

Page

troubles. One of the first results of their eating the fruit was that they realized and were ashamed of their nakedness.

OF STICKS

141. **scion**: shoot of a plant, descendant (especially of a *noble* family).

Haroun Al Raschid: 763-809, the famous Caliph of Bagdad.

djereed: a Persian javelin.

Xenophon . . . retreat: Xenophon, the Greek historian and one of Socrates' 'pupils,' led a band of 10,000 Greek mercenaries from Mesopotamia to Trebizond on the Black Sea, after the Persian prince Cyrus, in whose army they had served, had been killed at the battle of Cunaxa in 401 B.C. He told the story of this remarkable march of 1500 miles through most difficult country in his *Anabasis*.

Sardanapalus: or Assurbanipal, King of Assyria (669-640 B.C.), grandson of Sennacherib.

Zoroaster: the Persian astronomer and religious teacher.

builders of Babel: see Genesis, chap. xi.

142. **tipstaff**: a stave tipped with brass—a wand of office borne by a sheriff's officer.

Leadenhall-Market: the London distributing centre for poultry and game.

Quarter-staff: a stout pole 6-8 ft. long used by medieval peasants as a weapon.

Shillelah: Irish cudgel of blackthorn or oak.

143. **sceptropherous**: stick-carrying (Gk. *σκηπτρόφερος*).

nonplus: state of perplexity.

Agesilaus: a king of Sparta.

rods: i.e., the *fascies*, borne by the *lictors* (policemen or civil guards) before important officers of state in ancient Rome.

144. **Andrew Marvell**: 1621-78, poet and satirist.

exotic: of foreign origin.

Mr. Lilly: a perfumer with a shop in the Strand at which the *Tatler* (see n. to p. 194) was sold.

145. **Rape of the Lock**: by Alexander Pope: the reference is to IV, 119.

clouded cane: an artificially coloured malacca cane.

pinking: pricking.

Macklin: actor and playwright (1697-1797).

'translate his style': certainly his magniloquent style, as exemplified in the words quoted below, would require translating to the average footpad.

146. **Foote**: Samuel (1720-77), actor and dramatist, a well-

NOTES

Page

146. known mimic. The following quotation from Boswell's *Life of Johnson* illustrates the story:—

Dr. Johnson: What is the common price of an oak-stick?

Mr. Davies: Sixpence.

Dr. Johnson: Why then, Sir, give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity, for I am told Foote means to talk me off as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity.'

Macpherson, the compounder of Ossian: in 1762-3 James Macpherson produced two epic poems purporting to be translations of works by Ossian, a legendary Gaelic bard supposed to have lived in the third century. Their authenticity was challenged by Johnson among others.

bacular: an adjective coined by Hunt from the Latin *baculum*, a stick.

147. **sabbatical**: appropriate for Sunday use.
yclept: called (O.E.).

Acres's: Bob Acres, a character in Sheridan's *The Rivals*, whose courage always 'oozed out at his finger's ends.'

148. **Rhabdosophy, Sceptrosophy**: humorous compounds from the Greek words for 'staff' and 'sceptre.'

THE OLD LADY

151. **japan**: lacquer.

stomacher: part of a lady's dress covering the breast and often overlapping the skirt in a point. It was often richly embroidered.

frog-buttons: coat fastenings of spindle-shaped buttons and loops, common on old military uniforms.

distich: couplet.

Turkish Spy: *Letters written by a*, a translation of a work by Marana, published in French at the end of the seventeenth century. The letters purport to be written by a spy employed by Turkey to report on the political and social affairs in European countries.

Night Thoughts: by Edward Young (1683-1765), 'with all his defects,' says Dr. Johnson, 'a genius and a poet.'

Mrs. Rowe's Exercises: a book of devotions by Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe (1674-1737).

152. **Mrs. Glasse's Cookery**: a forerunner of *Mrs. Beeton*.

Sir Charles Grandison, and Clarissa: novels by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).

John Bunce: a novel by Thomas Amory (1691-1788), in which the hero's matrimonial adventures are interspersed with 'digressions on religious, literary and scientific subjects,

NOTES

Page

152. descriptions of scenery, algebra and trigonometry, and a good deal of eating and drinking.
in character and . . . coeval : suitable to her style and period.
calash : a light carriage with a low hood.
pattens : overshoes with wooden soles.
Marquis of Granby : C.-in.-C. of the British Army in 1766.
153. **Mr. Wilkes** : John Wilkes (1727-97), the editor of the *North Briton*, an able, witty, but unscrupulous man. He had a stormy political career: he was expelled from the House of Commons and outlawed in 1763: he returned in 1768 and was elected to the House again: again expelled, he was returned three times by the electors of Middlesex, and each time his election was annulled. He was Lord Mayor of London in 1774 and in that year he finally took his seat in the Commons without opposition.
still : always.
Princess Charlotte: daughter of George IV, who married Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, afterwards (1831) first King of the Belgians.

THE CITY OF THE ABSENT

155. **list** : pleases.
156. **Company**: the 'City Companies' are survivals of the old Merchant Guilds. They have largely lost their association with trade and commerce, and exist mainly to dispense charity and hospitality. They are administered by a Master (or Prime Warden) and his Wardens, assisted by a 'Court of Assistants.' The 'Livery' comprises the whole body of members. 'Worshipful' is part of the proper style and dignity of a City Company: e.g., 'The Worshipful Company of Mercers.'
Volunteering : the Volunteers of Dickens's day corresponded more or less to the Territorials of to-day.
157. **pew-opener**: the pews in old churches were often fitted with doors.
beadle : a parish officer appointed by the vestry or parochial council.
medium: someone with psychical powers of communicating with the dead.
charity children : poor children, frequently orphans, maintained and educated by a charitable organisation: in Dickens's day they wore a distinctive dress—the girls often wore scarlet cloaks.
158. **Willow, Willow** : the willow is proverbially associated

NOTES

Page

158. with sorrow; and 'Willow' often forms part of the refrain of old ballad laments. Cf. 'The Suicide's Grave' in Gilbert's *Mikado*, and 'Willow, Willow, Waly' in his *Patience*.
prismatic tears: drops of rain acting as prisms in the sunlight.
160. **telling** : counting.
161. **Wonderful Lamp** : i.e., Aladdin's.
reverses : changes of fortune.
small Debtors' Door: the small trap-door released under a man when he is hanged.
locomotive : perambulatory.
162. **Garraway's** : a famous coffee-house in Change Alley, Cornhill, founded in the sixteenth century.
Glyn and Co. : the famous banking firm.

BROKERS' AND MARINE-STORE SHOPS

164. **chiffoniers** : sideboards.
Long Acre : a street in the Covent Garden district, W.C.
165. **Pembroke tables** : have four fixed legs and hinged flaps supported at need by movable legs.
tent bedsteads: with a canopy, which when drawn about the bed resembles a bell-tent.
turn-up bedsteads: able to be turned up against the wall out of the way.
sofa bedstead : serving as a couch in the daytime.
166. **lustre** : a glass chandelier, often hung with 'drops,' i.e., pieces of cut glass.
167. **Royal Coburg Theatre** : in Lambeth, south of the Thames.
insurance plates : buildings insured against fire often displayed metal plates or medallions embossed with the device of the Insurance Co. That of the Sun Fire Office showed a rising sun.
Ratcliff Highway : near the Docks.
168. **King's Bench prison** . . . 'The Rules' : the debtors' prison in Southwark. The Rules were a defined area within which prisoners could live in the neighbourhood of the prison on giving security.

ON A CHALK-MARK ON THE DOOR

170. **in fine** : lastly.
The Cornhill Magazine : in which this essay appeared in April 1861. It was founded in 1860 with Thackeray as first editor.
his own . . . inventions : Thackeray was at this time engaged in writing *The Adventures of Philip and Denis Duval*.

NOTES

Page

170. **ovum and malum** : lit. the egg and the apple, i.e., hors d'œuvres and dessert.
171. **empyrean** : the highest heaven.
172. **still-room** : housekeeper's store-room.
Brentfords . . . **Kings** : Brentford is the county town of Middlesex. 'King of Brentford' is an expression for the chief notability in a small country town. In Buckingham's burlesque *The Rehearsal* (1671), Bayes (a character intended as a caricature of Dryden) rehearses a play of which he says the chief hinge is 'that I suppose two kings of the same place: as for example at Brentford . . .' Cowper in *The Task* has
 'United yet divided, twain at once;
 So sit two kings of Brentford on one throne.'
Knightsbridge Barracks: where the Horse Guards were quartered.
servi servorum : servants of servants.
173. **Camilla . . . the plain** : Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 372-3,
 'swift Camilla scours the plain,
 Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.'
 Camilla was queen of the Volsci. She was so fleet of foot that she could run over a field of corn without disturbing the blades, and skim the surface of the sea without wetting her feet. See Virgil, *Aeneid* VII, 808, sqq.
174. **square-toed state** : the staid, formal, prim period of middle-age.
glass bottle-tops : frequently built into the tops of walls to discourage trespassers.
175. **aspic** : a savoury jelly.
Guraçoa : a Dutch liqueur flavoured with the peel of bitter oranges.
176. **Tom Bowling** : the type of a model sailor. The original Tom Bowling of the sea-song was the brother of the author of the song, Charles Dibdin (1745-1814), and was for many years master of a merchant vessel.
Black-eyed Syousan : 'Sweet William's Farewell to Black-eyed Susan' is a popular ballad written by John Gay (1685-1732), the author of the *Beggar's Opera*.
Wapping Old Stairs: steps leading to the Thames side at Wapping. See n. to p. 45.
177. **eau sucrée** : sugared water.
178. **sulp me** : = swelp me: a common Cockney expletive.
Law bless you! : a corruption of 'Lord bless you,' another expletive.
179. **en pleine tragédie** : right in the middle of a tragedy.
180. **atqui sciebat**, etc. : 'and yet he knew what the barbarian torturer was preparing for him' : i.e. Regulus, when he elected

NOTES

Page

180. to return as a prisoner to Carthage. See Horace, *Odes*, III. v. 49.
epaulettes : ornamental shoulder-pieces on naval and military uniforms. When a private 'wins his epaulettes' he earns his promotion to commissioned rank.
Albino : white-haired.

NIL NISI BONUM

- Title** : from the Latin tag *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* = concerning the dead nothing but what is good.
183. **Sir Walter** : Sir W. Scott. Lockhart was his son-in-law.
one . . . Old : Washington Irving, the first American writer to achieve a reputation outside his native country. He wrote *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.*, *Bracebridge Hall* and *Tales of a Traveller*—collections of essays, short stories and sketches—a Life of Columbus and the *Conquest of Granada*. Thackeray's tribute is a laudatory one: for a more critical estimate see Hazlitt's *Elia and Geoffrey Crayon* (reprinted in *Lamb and Hazlitt* in this series).
born . . . republic : Irving was born in 1783; the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4th, 1786.
pater patriae : father of the fatherland, i.e., George Washington.
ate our salt : enjoyed our hospitality.
184. **war** : i.e., the War of 1812-1814.
185. **diplomatised** : given a diploma or honorary degree.
'Two Kings of Brentford smelling at one rose' : in Buckingham's *The Rehearsal*, Act II, Sc. ii opens with the stage direction 'Enter the two Kings, hand in hand.' The actors, to heighten the absurdity, used to make them enter 'smelling at one nosegay.' Cf. n. to p. 172.
187. **Bellot** : a French naval officer and Arctic explorer who in 1851 joined the expedition sent out by Lady Franklin to search for Sir John Franklin, the ill-fated discoverer of the North-west Passage. He was lost in an icecrack in a later Arctic expedition.
wins all the prizes : cf. p. 200, l. 18.
a place in the senate : Macaulay entered the House of Commons as member for the pocket borough of Calne in Wiltshire.
188. **post in the East** : in 1834 he was appointed legal adviser to the Supreme Council of India with a salary of £10,000 per annum.
Austerlitz : Napoleon defeated the Austrians and Russians here on December 2nd, 1805.

NOTES

Page

188. **Schönbrunn** : a summer residence of the Austrian royal family.
190. **à coeur ouvert** : frankly, sincerely.
domes : that of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome, of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and of the Pantheon at Rome.
catholic dome : the dome of the reading-room at the British Museum in Bloomsbury in the West Central part of London.
Catholic = universal, all-embracing.
Clarissa : see n. to p. 152.
Athenaeum : the famous club in Pall Mall.
didōta : Gk. = things worthy of reverence and awe.
laus Deo : praise be to God.
192. **the baton or the epaulettes** : the baton of a field-marshal or the epaulettes of an officer. Cf. n. to p. 180.

STEELE'S LETTERS

Richard Steele was educated at the Charterhouse, where he was a schoolfellow of Addison's, and at Christ Church. He left Oxford to enlist in the Coldstream Guards, and was soon given a commission. In 1706 he became Gentleman Usher to Prince George of Denmark, Queen Anne's consort. In 1707 he gave up the army on appointment to the post of Gazetteer (i.e., compiler of the Official Gazette) in the Whig administration of the time, in which Lord Sunderland was Secretary of State. In the same year he married his second wife, Mary Scurlock ('dear Prue'), his first wife having died soon after marriage.

193. **the Cockpit portal . . . the Tilt Yard** : at the southern end of Whitehall opposite the Banqueting Hall (now the United Services Museum) was a gate built across the road by Henry VIII to the design of Holbein. This gate was often known as the Cockpit Gate from its proximity on its western side to a cockpit built by Henry VIII but later demolished to make way for houses and offices for the Treasury, Privy Council, and Secretaries of State. The Holbein or Cockpit Gate was removed in 1729. A few yards north on the same (i.e., west) side of Whitehall was the old Tilt-yard, part of which by Steele's day was occupied by quarters for the Foot-Guards and Horse Guards. The building we know to-day as The Horse Guards was erected in 1751.
- Irish accent** : Steele was the son of a Dublin lawyer.
194. **the immortal 'Tatler'** : Steele founded *The Tatler* in 1709. It appeared three times a week until January 1711. The author adopted the name of Isaac Bickerstaff—a fictitious name invented by Jonathan Swift.

NOTES

Page

195. **Siege of Lille** : Lille capitulated to Prince Eugene in 1708.
 ‘**shoulder-dabbers**’ : men pressing for the payment of debts.
196. **sanguine** : see n. on *humour* to p. 18.
197. **as bad as Marlborough** : the Duke of Marlborough was reputed to be completely under the thumb of the Duchess (Sarah Jennings), who had a notoriously sharp tongue and violent temper.
- Dr. Swift . . . Stella . . . Mrs. Dingley** : Stella was Swift’s name for Esther Johnson. To her and her companion, Rebecca Dingley, he addressed a series of intimate letters, written in curious baby-language, describing his life in London. They are published as the *Journal to Stella*.

AN APOLOGY FOR IDLERS

199. **apology for** : defence of.
 a decree in absence : a decision or judgment passed upon an accused man in his absence.
 lèse-respectability : a breach of respectable behaviour: formed on the analogy of *lèse-majesté* (Lat. *laesa maiestas*—injured majesty, i.e., treason).
 gasconade : boastfulness. Gascons were reputed to be braggarts.
 formularies : codes, sets of rules or formulas.
 great handicap race . . . : i.e., earning money.
 Alexander . . . Diogenes : Alexander the Great invited Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher who lived in a tub, to ask him a favour. Diogenes replied: ‘Stand a little way out of my sunshine.’
 Barbarians: Gauls, in the Gallic invasion of the Roman Republic in 390 B.C.
200. **sent to Coventry** : outlawed, debarred from society.
 Lord Macaulay : cf. the tribute to him in Thackeray’s *Essay Nil nisi bonum*, pp. 187, sqq.
 shot in their locker : metaphor from a warship which has run short of ammunition.
 like the Lady of Shalott : see Tennyson’s poem with this title.
201. **lack-lustre** : dull. ✓
 Emphyteusis : a perpetual right in a piece of somebody else’s land.
 Stillicide : Lat. *stillicidium*—rain-water falling from the eaves of houses. Stevenson picked up these two legal terms when he was a law student.
 science : knowledge.

NOTES

Page

201. **Dickens and Balzac**: English and French novelists whose scenes and characters were drawn from 'the open street.'
Mr. Worldly Wiseman: see *Pilgrim's Progress*. The conversation that follows is after the style of Bunyan.
quotha: archaic for *quoth he* (perhaps the equivalent of the modern slang *sez you*). Forsooth, indeed (contemptuously).
metaphysics: abstruse philosophy.
202. **scholastic categories**: the medieval schoolmen (see n. to p. 5) followed Aristotle in dividing things under categories or heads.
Sainte-Beuve: the great French literary critic (1804-69).
the great Book: the book of Life.
recondite: remote, abstruse, obscure.
Belvedere: a raised turret providing a panoramic view; from the Italian for 'see well.'
204. ✓ **sublunary**: earthly.
plangent: noisy.
catholic: universal, wide—the opposite of *parochial*.
✓ **hackneyed**: worn out by drudgery.
✓ **coma**: insensibility.
✓ **furious . . . gold-mill**: frantic drudgery in the pursuit of wealth.
✓ **alienated**: out of their minds.
205. **flaw in a deed . . . turn of the market**: i.e., they are lawyers or stockbrokers.
walking gentlemen: stage characters who merely 'walk on' and have no lines to speak.
206. **Colonel Newcome . . . Fred Bayham . . . Mr. Barnes**: characters in Thackeray's *The Newcomes*. Col. Newcome was 'a simple-minded gentleman'; Bayham 'huge, handsome and jolly'; Barnes Newcome, 'a mean, venomous little snob.'
Barabbases: robbers. See *St. Matthew* xxvii, 16-26.
Northcote: the painter (d. 1831). See Hazlitt's essay *On the Conversation of Authors*.
a compact with the devil: such as Faust made.
like the quality of mercy: see *Merchant of Venice*, IV, i.
207. **forty-seventh proposition**: i.e., in Euclid's *Geometry* Book I: the theorem of Pythagoras.
Circumlocution Office: Dickens's name for a Civil Service Department bound by red tape. See *Little Dorrit*.
hag-ridden: subjected to nightmares.
208. **'so careless . . . life'**: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, LV. Nature, says Tennyson, seems intent on preserving the type or species, but neglects the fate of the individual member of it.
Sir Thomas Lucy's preserves: Shakespeare is said to

NOTES

Page

208. have left Stratford to avoid prosecution for poaching on Sir T. Lucy's game preserves. He caricatured Lucy in the character 'Shallow' of 2 *K. Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.
Atlas : according to the Greek legend supported the whole world on his shoulders.
209. **Master of the Ceremonies** : an allegorical reference to the supernatural power which controls human destiny.
lukewarm bullet : the earth, which (so the scientists tell us) is gradually cooling.
chimerical : figments of the imagination.

WALKING TOURS

210. **canting dilettantes** : mere dabblers in the arts, who continually repeat cant or stock phrases.
curaçoa : see n. to p. 175.
brown John : a large earthenware tankard more suitable for ale than for a liqueur.
five wits : supposed to be, 1. common sense, 2. imagination, 3. fantasy, 4. estimation, 5. memory. The expression is also used = the five senses. Cf. n. to p. 5.
211. **mince** : walk with affected delicacy.
Hazlitt : see p. 80.
like Christian : in *Pilgrim's Progress*, after the burden has fallen from his back.
lees : dregs.
212. **Abudah** : a Bagdad merchant who was haunted every night by an old hag (his conscience).
a coat of darkness : the 'cloak of invisibility' of the fairy-tales.
troubadour : jocularly used here for 'singer.'
clown : rustic.
213. **acrostics** : puzzles in which words have to be found whose initial, or initial and final, letters spell another word or words.
214. **great barons . . . standard** : a metaphor from feudal times when the King summoned his feudatories to help him in war.
phlegm : torpor, sluggishness—the unwillingness to stir or exert oneself that often succeeds healthy exercise. Cf. n. on *humour* to p. 18.
posts : hurries: cf. *post-haste*.
215. **says Milton** : in the *Areopagitica*.
elixir : the magic potion that was supposed to prolong life indefinitely.
216. **nicest** : most exact.
says Hazlitt : see p. 86.

NOTES

Page

216. **Heine**: German poet (1799-1856).
Tristram Shandy: see n. to p. 82.
provincial humours: peculiarities of provincial life. See n. to p. 18.
Burns: in *The Rigs of Barley*.
217. **castles . . . soil**: mere dreams to turn into solid reality built on a healthy foundation.
gear: i.e., imponderabilia, impedimenta such as goods, furniture, property, etc.
in the very . . . heresy: in the right mood to throw over the orthodox views of conventional society.
shuffling: trying to evade the issue.
Philistines: a term first used by Matthew Arnold for despisers of culture, 'with their narrow intellectual and spiritual outlook, their barren daily treadmill of routine, their absorption in superficial goods, their smug and sordid self-complacency' (Asquith).
218. **seventh circle**: we should say 'seventh heaven': a reference to the Mohammedan belief in the existence of seven heavens.
goes about: veers.
egregious: outstanding.

MEMOIRS OF AN ISLET

219. **Glück . . .**: 'prosperity and adversity are turned into song.'
Goethe: Johann Wolfgang Von (1749-1832), the German poet.
avatars: re-incarnations.
eyot: islet.
butterburrs: plant with large soft leaves.
my puppets: i.e., characters in my novels.
Allan Water: in Stirlingshire.
220. **the hero of another**: i.e., David Balfour in *Kidnapped*. The brig carrying him foundered on the dangerous Torran Rocks south of Erraid, and he managed to swim ashore. The picturesque, white-sanded bay where it is presumed he landed is popularly known as Davie Balfour's Bay.
Ross of Mull: a narrow, almost rectangular peninsular jutting out of the west coast of Mull. Iona (to the west) is separated by a strip of sea about a mile wide: Erraid (to the south-west), two miles from Iona, is separated only by a narrow channel which can be crossed on foot at low tide.
church of Columba: St. Columba (521-97), an Irish missionary of early Christianity, landed in Iona about 563

NOTES

Page

220. with a few followers, and there founded a monastic community. Using Iona as his headquarters, he was greatly instrumental in spreading Celtic Christianity in Scotland and northern England, and established monasteries in various places. The present Cathedral church of Iona was built in medieval times, and after being allowed to fall into ruin, was restored and re-roofed in 1905.
221. **my father** : Thomas Stevenson (1818-87), joint engineer to the Board of Northern Lights. His father, Robert Stevenson, had held this office before him and was responsible for the building of the famous Bell Rock lighthouse. Thomas, with his brother Alan, built Skerryvore, 'the noblest of all extant deep-sea lights,' and in conjunction with another brother, David, built the lighthouse on Dhu Heartach. It was when he was engaged upon this latter work that the young Robert Louis Stevenson accompanied his father to Erraid.
- Spurgeon's sermon** : Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92), the popular Baptist preacher.
222. **Ben More** : the highest mountain in Mull (3169 ft.).
black-trap : dark-coloured rock of columnar structure, probably the result of volcanic eruption.
fucus : seaweed with flat, feathery fronds.
223. **the ground . . . virgin** : happily it is still so.
bog plants : especially the aromatic bog-myrtle or sweet-gale.
- Uchd Aillun** : 'Allan's Lap' : probably a rocky eminence in Iona.
224. **in that year** : 1870—the Franco-Prussian War.
roost : tidal race.

FORGETTING

223. **Utopia** : the ideal state existing *nowhere* except in our imagination.
224. **Coleridge** : Samuel Taylor (1772-1834), poet, literary critic and philosopher. He was notoriously absent-minded. Meeting Charles Lamb one day in the Strand, he held his coat by a button while he talked to him. Lamb was in a hurry, snipped off the button with a pair of scissors and made his escape. When he returned some time afterwards, Coleridge was still talking—to the button!

A DISAPPOINTED MAN

237. **Golden Miller** : won the Grand National in 1934. The National Hunt Steeplechase is held at Cheltenham in March.

NOTES

Page

238. to the Wordsworthian countenance : cf.
 ' A primrose by a river's brim
 A yellow primrose was to him
 —To Wordsworth, something more.'
 (a parody of *Peter Bell*).
239. Oscar Wilde : b. 1856, d. 1900, poet and playwright.
 A leader of the Aesthetic movement (Art for Art's sake),
 parodied by Gilbert in *Patience*.
 Taj Mahal : the famous mausoleum at Agra built about
 1640 by Shah Jehan as a tomb for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal.
 Mosque at Cordova : a notable remnant of Moorish
 architecture in Spain. Charles V stuck a Gothic cathedral in
 the middle of it!
- Glovelly : a picturesque village in N. Devon and a
 favourite tourist resort.
 the face of a Helen : Helen of Troy—
 ' A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
 And most divinely fair.'
 (Tennyson, *A Dream of Fair Women.*)
- ribbon development: the building of houses on the sides
 of arterial roads.
240. Utopia : see n. to p. 233.

